University of Alberta

Colonial Legacies and Independent Travel to India: Unpacking the transnational construction of innocence

by

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Abstract

Independent travel, a less rigorous form of backpacking, is defined through its difference from mass tourism. Opposing the commodification and cultural insensitivity that many independent travelers associate with more mainstream forms of tourism, independent travel is articulated through ideals of non-commodification, social responsibility, and meaningful cultural interaction. Thus, many independent travelers understand their travel practices as benign, if not benevolent. In carving out a socially just alternative practice of tourism, independent travelers are dependent upon tenets of liberalism, including individualism. This individualism is critical to the practice of independent travel because it enables individual travelers to understand themselves as distinct from the broader economic, political and social inequalities that frame their travel. I call this dissociation the *social construction of innocence*.

My analysis is based on three months of ethnographic fieldwork in India. The participant observation and interviews I conducted with independent travelers yielded noteworthy themes related to the social construction of innocence. After reflecting upon the significance of transience for conducting ethnographic research, I explore the articulations between independent travel, self-development, liberalism, and neo-colonialism. I then consider travelers' representations of India and Indians, with specific attention to the colonial lenses through which these narratives are constructed. These constructions are not only racialized, but are also highly gendered. Taking up the sexual harassment of white women travelers, I deconstruct sexualized narratives of Indian men as a threat and women travelers as vulnerable with specific attention to the ways in which these discourses are complicit in racialized patriarchy. Finally, I consider those moments

in which the 'innocence' of independent travel and independent travelers is disrupted by travelers' reflections on their encounters with beggars and the poverty they observe in India.

My analyses signal the deep entanglement of independent travel with colonial legacies – precisely the association that independent travel, as an institutionalized alternative form of travel, seeks to avoid. Given this contradiction, it is only through the social construction of innocence – the detachment of individual travelers from the broader contexts within which they travel – that independent travel can sustain itself as an alternative form of travel.

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I. Introduction

This is a project about individual travelers from Western countries, their decisions to go to India, the narratives of their best and worst experiences in India, their reflections on self-development, and their interactions with local Indians. This is also a project about globalization, neo-colonialism and liberalism. The challenge I have undertaken is to put individuals' constructions of their travel practices (and themselves) into the context of the global capitalist economy and the neo-colonial legacies that haunt their independent travel – an ostensibly benign or beneficial alternative to mainstream tourism. Neo-colonialist discourses of cultural Otherness have an historical and geographical reach that extends beyond the intentions and practices of individual travelers to India.

My analysis is not an effort to challenge or critique the perspectives of individual travelers. Rather, I take up travelers' narratives in relation to broader discourses (such as those of neo-colonial and liberalism) to explore the (re)productions, distortions and refusals of discursive constructions of Self and Other in the context of independent travel as well as the ways in which these discourses, upon which travel is dependent, might be infused with colonial legacies in spite of contrary intentions.

This project turns on the social construction of innocence. As a means through which independent travelers dissociate themselves from the patterns of inclusion and exclusion that are present in their travels, and indeed enable their travels, the social construction of innocence emerges as a technique that minimizes and reconciles the contradictions between independent travelers' search for culturally sensitive and socially responsible travel alongside the pervasive inequalities that both facilitate that travel and give it meaning. Drawing on the literatures on independent travel (and backpacking), and

tourism more generally, along with three months of ethnographic fieldwork, my project unpacks the ways in which independent travel sits uncomfortably within its broader context. Although independent travel is predicated upon this innocence, and actively reproduces it in order to remain coherent, the innocence of independent travel is constantly under threat by the global relations that frame travel to the so-called Third World.[1]

Independent travel can be understood as both a grassroots alternative and insidious form of tourism. At the same time that independent travelers are more likely to use local rather than multinational tourist services (e.g. in choice of accommodations) in contrast to mass tourism, the construction of innocence surrounding this form of travel obscures individuals' articulations with the broader structures within which they travel. While mass tourists may insulate themselves from the literal manifestations of these structures (such as the exclusion of poverty by the walls of gated resorts) many independent travelers seek out poverty as spectacle and narrate their experiences so as to dismiss the significance of the poverty or to remove themselves from it. Thus, although travelers engage in the spaces in which they travel in a way that differs from stereotypical tourism, the possibilities for disrupting global hegemonic inequality are muted by constructions of innocence.

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[1] In using the term "Third World," I draw both from Ella Shohat (1992) and my own research, choosing the term for its political basis, as well as for the problems it presents. The possibilities for the term, Shohat argues (contra the variants of "post-colonial"), include its ability to call forward connected resistances to neo-colonialisms, highlighting shared histories of structurally comparable colonialism as the basis on which to bring diverse subjects together in their struggles and challenges. Despite this possibility, Shohat argues that although the term is problematic because it "in short, flattens heterogeneities, masks contradictions, and elides differences" (p.101). Overall, the term "Third World" encapsulates an agentic political perspective, at the same time as it connotes an imposed homogeneity and fixity. This tension is productive for my deconstruction of the implicit innocence of independent travel and its denial of subjectivity and agency to cultural Others.

I initially undertook this project in order to understand how travelers from privileged Western countries think about the broader social, political and economic inequalities that facilitate their travel. I also wanted to understand how travelers justified, minimized, confronted, or otherwise negotiated the neo-colonial facets of their travel. These questions turn on the contradiction between the global inequalities that facilitate travel and the discourse of travel as a practice underpinned by 'good' intentions of non-commodification and cultural responsibility, in contrast to mass tourism. Individual travelers actively embrace opportunities to grow as individuals through an alternative form of travel that is narrated as benign, if not beneficial for the people and places they visit. Yet these opportunities take place in a structural context marked by unequal mobilities, poverty, and gendered and racialized neo-colonialism. My analysis suggests that this dissonance – potentially fatal to the project of benign or even beneficial forms of travel – is managed through the social construction of innocence of independent travel and travelers.

There is as yet little literature that puts post-structuralist theorizing of travel and tourism into conversation with post-colonial perspectives (Hutnyk, 1996, is a notable exception). The marriage of these two theoretical orientations is critical to the scholarship on travel and tourism. Currently, alongside with policy analyses, post-structuralist analyses of travel and tourism dominate the literature. Such analyses provide sophisticated modes of theorizing.

Yet, within such a theoretical perspective, and particularly when addressing tourism in the so-called Third World, the historical legacies of colonialism – both material and discursive – are often overshadowed. Travel as leisure emerged alongside the project of colonialism (Pratt, 1992) and, as I argue, the two practices remain intertwined. Contemporary practices of travel are dependent upon the political and economic

inequalities that are legacies of colonialism. Thus, grounding post-structuralist theorizing within post-colonial critique situates travel within the historical context from which it emerged and to which it remains bound.

My work points to the resonances and clashes between scholars' theorizings of travel and tourism and the narratives and understandings of lay travelers. By juxtaposing these perspectives, I highlight some of the disjunctures between the ideals of travel that have been problematized by some scholars (e.g. Urry, 2002; Edensor, 1998) and the desire of many travelers to participate in a form of travel that is recognizable both within the travel subculture and within their home settings. I aim to contribute to the body of scholarship that actively engages both travelers' and scholars' perspectives (see O'Reilly (2006), Noy (2004), and Hutnyk (1996)).

Contact Zones

Contemporary travel is useful as a lens through which to focus on the articulations between individuals and the global settings in which they are situated. In an attempt to move beyond the phrase "colonial frontier," which speaks to the European expansionist project, Pratt (1992) coined the term "contact zone." This phrase emphasizes the co-presence of subjects who have previously been separated temporally, spatially, or both. Pratt defines a contact zone as:

> The space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving condition of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict. (1992:6)

Although her analyses focus on European colonial travel writings beginning in the 18th century, they hold considerable insights for contemporary narratives of travel, albeit with some necessary adjustments. Travelers to India are traversing geography and time.

Their geographical travel from their First World countries to India is obvious. Their time travel, however, is more subtle and is rooted in McClintock's (1995) conceptualization of "anachronistic space." Anachronistic space is a dislocation from history in which colonized peoples are understood to "exist in a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans, atavistic, irrational, bereft of human agency – the living embodiment of the archaic 'primitive'" (1995:30). The cultural component that drives many contemporary forms of travel is predicated upon this anachronistic space, as will be elaborated below.

Where the contact zone differs from contemporary relations of travel is in its "coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (Pratt, 1992:6). This antagonistic language speaks to a militarism that underpins travel as exploration and conquering, in contrast to contemporary forms of travel that often take positive cultural engagement as their basis. As such, contemporary travel is infused with neo-colonialism. Neo-colonial encounters, Shohat (1997) argues, are more subtle in their operation as they shift from formal political and military domination to less obvious forms of control, such as economics. This economic control is manifested through the shift to transnational corporations concentrated in the West, which extract resources (including labour) without long-term commitments (Laxer, 2003) as well as through the influence of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (and thus core states) on the sovereignty of indebted peripheral states (Robbins, 2005:196). Although it is possible that many historical travel practices involved "coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict," (Pratt, 1992:6), contemporary forms of travel obscure these negative aspects through appeals to the celebration of diversity and cultural sensitivity, projects linked to globalization and liberalism, and thus the broader project of modernity.

A Modern Project

For approximately 500 years, people and societies have been struggling with the implications of modernization (Berman, 1988). Modern experiences and environments challenge religious, ethnic, class, national, and ideological borders (Berman, 1988). This shifting understanding of what were ostensibly static categories is deeply implicated in the processes that we know as globalization. Rather than understanding globalization as simply increasing the scale of regionalized identities, geographies, and experiences, Urry (2000) argues that a fundamental shift is necessary to understand the challenges that globalization poses to borders. In particular, Urry (2000) calls for a shift in the ways in which mobilities are considered, insomuch as the movement of people, money, information, and goods disrupt the borders through which regions are constructed:

> Globalisation should not be viewed in this way, as one larger region replacing the smaller region of each society. Rather globalisation involves replacing the metaphor of society as *region* with the metaphor of the global conceived of as *network* and as *fluid*.... Moreover, the appropriate metaphor to capture these intersections of peoples and objects is not that of a vertical structure. The metaphor of structure typically involves a centre, a concentration of power, vertical hierarchy and a formal or informal constitution. (p.33)

As Urry argues against the metaphor of a structure of power relations, he acknowledges the processes that he identifies as globalization are not equitably distributed. Rather, globalization is characterized by "the remarkably uneven and fragmented flows of people, information, objects, money, images and risks across regions in strikingly faster and unpredictable shapes" (Urry, 2000:38).

In spite of global flows and challenges to the borders of states and communities and societies that these flows pose, many individuals and groups and nations remain highly invested in both attempting to close the borders (including those of identity) – at

least to particular undesirable Others – that mark the 'outside' and to construct cohesiveness 'within' (see, for instance, Sharma, 2006). Such attempts to thwart some aspects of globalization while enabling, or even encouraging, other aspects correspond with the unequal distribution of power that contextualizes contemporary global processes and their historical antecedents.

The projects of colonialism and globalization are not distinct projects, but are historically bound:

> Globalization is a direct consequence of European expansion beginning from the era of colonization, entrenching itself during the post World War II era of colonial development and emerging in the latter part of the century as a 'world-wide' phenomenon. (Banerjee and Linstead, 2001:690)

While this orientation seems to imply that colonialism has given way to globalization in the late 20th century, other scholars highlight the contemporary articulations between colonialism and globalization. For instance, Laxer (2003) found "[w]idespread agreement in the Majority World [i.e. underdeveloped] that globalization is another word for recolonization" (p.139). This "recolonization" differs from its colonizing predecessors in some ways, including the untying of transnational profit-making from specific geographic locations and the shift from denying Indigenous knowledges to exploiting and profiting from these knowledges. It also differs in the population that is most affected by these contemporary transnational practices. In her analysis of temporary foreign labour and nation-building in Canada, Sharma (2006) argues that the supposed distinctiveness of globalization from colonialism is deceptive:

> The People whose sovereignty has been eroded by processes of globalization are clearly not Indigenous peoples or other non-White people but White Canadians, again most often White men – the main beneficiaries of the approximate quarter century golden age of nationalist development in Canada. The losses (of land, self-determination, identity, wealth, security, and life) associated with previous periods of

> globalization, because they are overwhelmingly the losses of indigenous peoples and other non-Whites, are rendered unimportant. (p.47)

Thus, the risks and complications of globalization have been heralded as marking a new historical era only because the destabilizing effects of these transnational practices have begun to have implications for those who have occupied a position of privilege through previous such practices. Considered from a less ethnocentric perspective, then, the contemporary processes of globalization represent a modified continuation of earlier colonial processes.[2]

The modern project of neo-colonialism continues the modern project of colonialism insomuch as both antecedent forms of colonial rule and contemporary forms of neo-colonialism construct supranational blocs (i.e. 'the colonizers' and 'the colonized' or 'the West' and 'the rest') (Balibar, 1991). This construction takes place at the level of international institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, as well as at the level of individuals. Although scholarship in the areas of post-colonialism and globalization have rejected the notion of a 'Western subject', the idea(l) of such a subject persists. Indeed, it was evident in the comments of many of the travelers with whom I spoke. The Western subject was constructed through references to a range of qualities, including universalism, rationalism, individualism, and – significantly – difference from Indians.

> Kristin: do you think when you're traveling it's significant at all that you're Australian?

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[2] For this reason, to highlight the continuation between the era of colonialism characterized by formalized political rule and current processes by which many so-called Third World countries continue to be subjected to control through more insidious means (Shohat, 1992), I use the term (neo)colonialism. See McClintock (1995:11-12) for a further critique of the term 'post-colonialism' because of the way it instantiates colonialism as the predominant marked moment in history.

Nigel: no. I think I'm just a Westerner.[3]

They know you are Western, you're more open-minded. (Sara)

I think people most of them in the Western country, Western country people live for the families and for their own life, they don't other (*sic*), other things, only their own life. And in here you see the community working altogether and I think when community is altogether it's more, much more powerful and Western countries people forget and it's, you're not alone on this planet and it's not only your friends and it's not only your family, it's way more. (Daniel)

There's no way in the world I would strap a bomb on my body and go on blowing myself up, for whoever's cause it was. Maybe that's Western thinking. (Liam)

There's obviously it's a diverse culture here compared to what we are used to in the Western world. (Simon)

These subject-making narratives are manifestations of the liberal ideology that emerged out of the Enlightenment period (Goldberg, 1993). The values encompassed by liberalism include freedom, rationalism, minimal state intervention, equality, and individualism (Hampton, 1997). As an ideology, liberalism takes various forms, ranging from Rawls' strong individualist to Taylor's communitarianism (Carter and Stokes, 1998). Despite this range of forms, liberalism as an ideology is constituted through shared principles and values, even though these principles and values are themselves ambiguous and subject to multiple, possibly inconsistent, interpretations. Indeed, one of the characteristics of liberalism is its commitment to abstract universalism (Bannerji, 2000; Goldberg, 1993).

As an ideology, liberalism permeates both institutions and individuals' everyday lives:

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[3] I have identified the travelers using pseudonyms and the quotes are excerpts of participants' interviews transcribed verbatim. The awkward grammar and word choice sometimes found in these excerpts reflect travelers' efforts to speak in a language in which they were not necessarily comfortable.

> Liberalism in its contemporary form is not so much a set of ideas or doctrines to which people subscribe by conscious choice; it is a way of seeing the social world, and a set of assumptions about it, which are absorbed by the individual in so natural and gradual a manner that he or she is not conscious of their being assumptions at all. (Arblaster, 1984:6).

Of the tenets of liberalism, individualism is the most notable, for it is upon individualism that the other tenets depend. That is, freedom is understood as freedom of the individual, either in terms of freedom from control – negative freedom – or as freedom to develop as an individual – positive freedom (Berlin, 1977). Equality is also conceived of in terms of individuals' equality of opportunity.[4]

The liberal emphasis on the individual is significant in the context of travel. First, travel is often understood by those who travel and by the societies from which they travel as an opportunity to engage in processes of self-development (see Chapter 3). Moreover, and not insignificant to my project, liberalism – with its focus on the individual – enables individuals to conceive of themselves outside of the structural contexts that result in systematic exclusions. Even liberal theorists with less inflexible views on individualism have been critiqued for their inattention to hegemony and the patterned concentration of power. For instance, even though Taylor (1994) argues that it is not possible to conceive of individuals outside of their society, his work on liberalism and diversity has been critiqued because

> He seems not to make any distinction between different kinds of differences, those which could be called cultural diversities and those structured through power relations and which could be encoded as gender, "race" and class. (Bannerji, 2000:132)

---

[4] Arblaster astutely points out liberalism's uncomfortable relationship with equality, insomuch as equality of opportunity would be dependent upon state intervention through equalization, which runs contrary to the premise of private property, a value that articulates the connections between liberalism and capitalism (MacPherson, 1992; Arblaster, 1984).

It is precisely this lack of reflexivity towards "different kinds of difference" that enables travelers to remove themselves from their structural context and engage in the social construction of innocence.

The Social Construction of Innocence

The social construction of innocence is critical to liberal projects, particularly those that embrace plurality or diversity. Liberalism's commitment to individual equality sits uncomfortably alongside "different kinds of difference," which are embedded in patterned and discrepant power distributions. It is precisely this emphasis of the individual over the structural context within which that individual is situated that enables the dissociation of individuals from relations of power. This active dissociation of (privileged) individuals from broader systems of inequality I identify as the *social construction of innocence*. As atomistic individuals, good intentions are sufficient to mitigate systemic exclusions, even though all individuals – including myself as I write this dissertation – are tangled, and multiply situated, within lopsided distributions of power.

The social construction of innocence has been pivotal to past colonial projects, which drew upon liberal norms as evidence of colonial civility and justification for intervention, as well as contemporary encounters with (neo)colonialism, which are mitigated through a 'civilized' (and superficial) egalitarianism. Yet even as many scholars within the post-colonial genre allude to the social construction of innocence, this concept is not often foregrounded or theoretically deconstructed in their work. Pratt (1992) pays the greatest attention to the significance of constructing innocence in her concept of anti-conquest, a means to secure the innocence of European scientists and travelers while their travel practices at the same time reins[illegible]

identified this concept in her study of historical travel writings, its importance persists in contemporary efforts to manage inequalities. Similarly, Frankenberg (1993) speaks of the "power evasion" of her ethnographic participants as a means through which these women were able to secure their feelings of goodness while confronting an issue – in this case, racialization – that had the potential to make them feel badly:

> Power evasion involves a selective attention to difference, allowing in conscious scrutiny – even conscious embrace – those differences that make the speaker feel good but continuing to evade by means of partial description, euphemism, and self-contradiction those that make the speaker feel bad. The latter... involved the naming of inequality, power imbalance, hatred or fear. (p.156)

Analogous forms of evasion have been executed at the national level. For instance, Mackey (1999) speaks to the ways in which the historical settling of the land now known as Canada has been reimagined. Rather than overtly erasing the presence of Aboriginal peoples, these peoples – subjected to governmental policies of cultural genocide – are incorporated as "the colourful recipients of benevolence, the necessary 'others' who reflect back white Canada's self-image of tolerance" (Mackey, 1999:2). Through this revisioning, Aboriginal peoples contribute to the munificence of Canadian nation-builders. Obscuring a backdrop of systematized oppression, this revisioning enables Canada – and Canadians – to imagine itself (and themselves) as tolerant. In Calcutta, Hutnyk (1996) found that charity work functioned in a similar way to veil the colonial legacies within which volunteering took place, as well as the overall contribution of charity to the reproduction of such legacies:

> Charity is dysfunctional in that it helps to keep the 'Third World' in the state of an impoverished and disenfranchised recipient of limited 'aid' rather than as partners in redistributions and just exchange. This suggests that tourism and charity in the Third World [illegible]

Hutnyk is highly critical of the practice of charity not only because of the social capital that it grants to the individual, but because it is entrenched within and contributes to the reproduction of a global system of exclusion.

Reimagining 'Race'

'Race' troubles the social construction of innocence. In the 1920s, understandings of 'race' as a biological quality began to be replaced with understandings of 'race' as a cultural or behavioural quality (Frankenberg, 1993). This shift from biological difference to cultural difference enabled practices of racialization to be incorporated into the liberal model of egalitarianism through the rubric of pluralism. Yet, as discussed above, even inclusive forms of liberalism do not account for "different kinds of difference" (Bannerji, 2000). Indeed, liberalism has been critiqued for the ways in which it enables racism:

> [A new racism] is denied just as it maps the contours internal to and bordering the postcolonial, postcommunity, postmodern, postapartheid, and increasingly transnational era. It is contradictorily celebrated as multicultural diversity just as it rationalizes hegemonic control of difference, access and prevailing power. In short, liberal meliorism – whether that of modernity or postmodernity – blinds itself to the transformations in racist expressions, in racist culture. It runs from the alterations in varying forms of racisms, in the contents of their representations, in the modes and implications of their significations, and in their functions and outcomes. (Goldberg, 1993:8)

In contemporary terms, liberalism rewrites "race" into the language of "diversity," the celebration of which enables citizens and states to celebrate not only the superficial diversity which multiculturalism Others are able to enact (Bannerji, 2000), but also their own tolerance. Yet this tolera
above – reiterates the pow

At the same time that the concepts of tolerance and the celebration of diversity provide social capital to those citizens and states who are tolerant by embracing diversity (rather than racialization), this diversity is acontextualized, thereby minimizing the looming threat of historic and systematic inequalities to the goodness of tolerant people:

> The discourse of diversity is not new or *sui generis*. As I mentioned before, it is derived from and is in keeping with a language of plurality that has existed in liberal democracy. It relies... on reading the notion of difference in a socially abstract manner, which also wipes away its location in history, thus obscuring colonialism, capital and slavery. It displaces these political and historical readings by presenting a complex interpretive code which encapsulates a few particularities of people's cultures, adding a touch of reality, and averts our gaze from power relations or differences.... (Bannerji, 2000:51)

Thus, the semiotic shift from racialization to diversity is critical to the social construction of innocence, particularly as it is enacted through culturally based travel. It is not only through liberal atomistic individualism that independent travelers are able to engage in the social construction of innocence, but it is through the social construction of innocence – however unwittingly – that this form of travel is able to define itself as a socially responsible alternative to mass travel.

The Making of Independent Travelers

> India can be hard going for travelers and is guaranteed to challenge, inspire and confound all at once. The poverty is confronting, Indian bureaucracy would test the patience of a saint, bus journeys on pothole riddled roads can zap your energy in a flash, and even the most experienced travelers find their tempers frayed at some point. Yet it's all part of what makes India the unique travel experience that it [illegible] (Lonely Planet, 2003:17-18)

Europe, through Asia to Australia (Lonely Planet, 2007). This guidebook is significant to my project not only because of its popularity amongst travelers, but also because the contradictions between independent travel, as a more socially responsible form of travel, and the perpetuation of colonial legacies that inhere within it. The birth of this particular guide was a significant step in the reification of the subject position of a self-sufficient, grassroots 'traveler.' For many travelers, the *Lonely Planet* guidebook produces and reflects (for instance, through reader contributions) the norms that organize independent travel, along with idealized constructions of independent travelers and cultural Others. This guidebook provides coherence to an otherwise incoherent subculture, given the impermanency of its members and space (Sorenson, 2003). For these reasons, I believe the *Lonely Planet* is a productive text through which to introduce the independent traveler as a unique subject position.

This guide, in one of its earliest Southeast Asia editions, reified the distinction between travelers and tourists, a distinction that continues to permeate individual narratives of overseas experiences:

> If I had to define my belief in travel it's that if you've been some place and stayed in the local Hilton you've not been there (sorry Conrad). Tourists stay in Hiltons, travellers don't. The traveller wants to see the country at ground level, to breathe it, experience it – live it. (Wheeler, in Allon, 2004:50)

This orientation towards travel, and the guidebook itself, is most commonly associated with self-identified backpackers. As an alternative to "backpacker," I use the term "independent traveler" instead. This term helps address the reluctance of many of the people I spoke with to use the term "backpacker" to describe themselves because of the purist ideals or negative connotations associated with the label (see "Idealized Independent Travel as Non-Tourism," Chapter 3). "Independent traveler" addresses this distinction while

continuing to encapsulate many of the aspects of backpacking that designate these practices as travel and not tourism (a distinction that will be elaborated at length in Chapter 3). Generally, independent travelers take relatively long overseas trips; travel on a restricted budget; avoid resort areas, choosing instead smaller, inexpensive, locally-owned accommodation (Sorenson, 2000). They are independent in the means by which they undertake their travels. Independent travelers often prefer to make their own reservations for buses and trains, rather than working through a travel agent; they frequently refuse to pay for the services of guides at designated tourist sites; and, generally, they attempt to remain outside of the formal tourist infrastructure that Edensor (1998) describes as "enclavic," those sites that

> ...are governed by a system of ordering that materialises an ideology of consumption and regulates the performance of tourists, [and that] acts to mask the heterotopic ambiguities and incongruities present. (p.52)

Within this broad group, I was particularly interested in those travelers who traveled to experience other cultures and as an opportunity for self-development.

Ostensibly refusing these regulated tourist spaces, the *Lonely Planet* offers an alternative route through the many countries for which it publishes guides. This travel guide, which organizes and reproduces the category of "travelers" and which also organized my travel, has been highly successful. Hutnyk (1996) points to the numbers of travelers who carry the *Lonely Planet's Travel Survival Kit: India* as evidence of its popularity, an observation confirmed by my fieldwork. He suggests that the book is successful in part due to its chatty writing style. The writing style is not simply accessible, but actually controls the representations of India to which travelers using the guide may be open (Bhattacharyya, 1997). By presenting travel information as self-evident facts, rather than interpretations of the (invisible) authors, the book represents India such that "any

reasonable person is expected to agree with the evaluation" (Bhattacharyya, 1997:375). Thus, far from enabling independent travelers to move beyond a singular tourist perspective and develop their own, the *Lonely Planet* merely provides a singular alternative perspective (Gogia, 2002:45).

This perspective is particularly problematic in a neo-colonial setting. Not only is a singular perspective put forward for independent travelers, but this perspective is heavily inflected with Othering. Speaking to the *Lonely Planet* in particular, Gogia argues:

> The guidebook, in its multifarious descriptions fulfills several functions: it domesticates foreign destinations into recognizable and maneuverable spaces, it sifts through the multitude of locations to offer the sites worthy of visiting and lastly, it provides the Orientalist lens from with the site can be gazed upon. (2002:49)

This specific observation is part of a broader critique of travel guides for generally encouraging, reinforcing and reproducing a specific way of seeing the Other, promoting tourists' desires "to identify the already defined signs of exoticism as exotic" (Behdad, 1994:52), a desire corroborated by Jenkins' (2003) analysis of the "circle of representation" through which backpackers reproduced popular and iconic photographs of faraway places. Thus, the *Lonely Planet* is part of a broader body of texts that impart a contemporarily and historically compressed vision of exotic locales, including India.

Not only has the *Lonely Planet* as a text been criticized for its implicatedness in perpetuating colonial legacies, but the form of travel it advocates has also been the focus of a growing body of critique. Although some scholars have seen backpacking and independent travel as potential allies in limiting the impact of tourism on a given locale, (e.g. Westerhausen and Macbeth, 2003), many have challenged the notion that alternative forms of travel are less harmful to 'host' people and places than mass tourism. Empirical research in Thailand indicates that although alternative tourists are characterized as

culturally sensitive, culturally respectful and minimally disruptive of the local culture, the behaviour of many of the travelers demonstrate negligible cultural awareness of sensitivity (Kontogeorgopolous, 2003).

In independent travel, romantic notions of discovery and exploration drive travelers to get "off-the-beaten-track." This desire to find uncontaminated people and places results in a volatility of economy for those operating small-scale local businesses who find themselves without clients once an area has become too popular (Palmer, 1998). In addition, such travel facilitates the intrusion of large-scale multi-national tourism operations (Spreitzhofer, 2002) which further restricts the mobilities of local peoples (Gogia, 2006). As an alternative to mass tourism, independent travel may escape some of the particulars upon which critiques of mass tourism are based, but is similarly contextualized by global inequalities between First and Third Worlds.

Authenticity in Tourism

Many people travel to experience different places and cultures. Because of the centrality of this desired 'difference,' travelers often struggle to negotiate between difference that has been staged and difference that is apparently spontaneous or 'authentic.' This notion of 'authenticity' has itself been the subject of considerable scholarship.

One of the landmark works that approaches tourism from a critical perspective is MacCannell's (1976) structuralist Marxist analysis. Responding to the tendency of industrial social sciences to invigilate marginalized groups, MacCannell shifts his analysis to the middle-class and their leisure. Following the social movements of the 1960s, MacCannell speculates that leisure is on its way to displacing work's centrality to social

relations and, as such, investigations of leisure are of increasing importance in the analysis of the modern world. Moreover, MacCannell believes that through leisure tourists are able to move beyond the structurally differentiated subject positions imposed through a capitalist economic system and "step out into the universal drama of modernity" (1976:7).

One of the most significant legacies of MacCannell's (1976) analysis is the issue of authenticity in tourism. Arguing that many tourist settings stage authenticity for tourists, MacCannell differentiates between 'real' authenticity – i.e. "incursions into the life of the society they visit" (1976:97) – and staged authenticity. Staged authenticity is the product of an understanding of space and performance inspired by Goffman. Using Goffman's metaphor to explain tourism, the front stage is organized touristic space, while the back stage is authentic space. MacCannell's (1976) staged authenticity complicates this binary: it is front stage represented for tourists as back stage space. These spaces are "copies that are presented as disclosing more about the real thing than the real thing itself discloses" (1976:102). Increasingly, MacCannell argues, new spaces are opening up that permit outsiders to "view details in the inner operation of a commercial, domestic, industrial, or public institutions" (1989:99) and satisfy a desire for discovery. Yet these spaces, according to MacCannell, are not truly "back stage," implicitly defined as spontaneous and unperformed, but rather "a *set stage*, a *tourist setting*, or simply, a *set* depending on how purposefully worked up for tourists the display is" (1989:100, original emphasis).

As much as he challenges tourist practice through his observation that tourists often desire to see authenticity, MacCannell assumes (by his differentiation between authenticity and staged authenticity) that there exists a 'real' life in which people of a given society are engaged, which is non-performative and is qualitatively different from that

observed by tourists. The ideal of cultural authenticity is implicitly present prior to, and outside of, the search by travelers and tourists: back stage does exist and it is the cultural-spatial location that drives the anti-tourist desire to get off-the-beaten-path. Shepherd (2002) questions MacCannell's analysis on the grounds that it assumes a zero-sum relationship between culture and tourism. Moreover, MacCannell's conceptualization imagines authenticity as a quality that inheres in an object or practice rather than a value of Western, liberal modes of thinking (Olsen, 2002).

This emphasis on authenticity has been subject to considerable critique in more recent post-structuralist analyses of tourism. Urry (1990) deconstructs the notion of authenticity, arguing that the dichotomy between the everyday ordinary and the extraordinary, which is actively sought by tourists, is socially constructed. Moreover, he argues that cultures are always changing and as a result, "it is not clear why the apparently inauthentic staging for the tourist is so very different from the processes of cultural remaking that happens in all cultures anyway" (2002:9). Similarly, Rojek (1997) argues against the notion of authenticity driving tourist practice, proposing that "it is not the authenticity of sights that lures us on but rather the hunger for ever-new distractions" (p.56). Similar critiques of authenticity have also been put forward by Shepherd (2002) and Olsen (2002). By shifting focus away from debates about what is authentic, and instead concentrating on the social processes and investments through which objects and experiences are constructed to be authentic, Shepherd (2002) argues that the scholars of tourism can move beyond the ostensible dichotomy between the sacred/authentic and profane/inauthentic.

Olsen (2002) is similarly interested in the processes that underpin conceptualizations of, rather than superficial judgements of, authenticity:

> Such a perspective opens up for analysing how social processes elevate some objects by these ideas [of attributed authenticity], how different groups apprehend the concept differently, how it is intentionally sought/created, and how these ideas are contested. In short, they attribute some agency to the actors that is lacking in MacCannell's (1999) concept of authenticity. Authentic and inauthentic are no longer asymmetrical counterconcepts per se, but an asymmetry that is a matter for investigation. (Olsen, 2002:164)

Using a Finnish tourist enterprise that centres on the restoration and sailing of old, local ships, Olsen (2002) proposes an alternative approach to tourism. In his analysis of the tourist project, commodified relations are foregrounded, but mitigated through the subordination of tourists to the purveyors of the experience through the integration of tourists into the crew hierarchy. Olsen argues that this arrangement strips the tourist of the rights of their tourist role and requires their cooperation with and dependence upon the seller of the experience. Similarly, eco-tourists in the Kenyan savannah who rely on their spear-wielding Maasai guides must also subordinate their tourist rights in order to preserve their safety. Arguing that the tourist role is now rejected even by tourists (see also McCabe, 2005), Olsen believes that although tourists may initially draw upon MacCannell's notions of authenticity, through the process of participating in a particular experience, "these people allow themselves to continuously change roles during their vacations" (2002:177). Given the emphases on the mobilities and flows of globalization that emerged after MacCannell's original work, the concept of cultural authenticity – as a quality that inheres in a particular culture – has been rejected by scholars of tourism.

Theorizing tourism from a post-structuralist perspective, Urry (2002) emphasizes the temporally and socially contingent tourist gaze in place of MacCannell's Marxist tourist structure. The resulting multiplicity of gazes is socially organized and is also systematized. They are dependent upon difference from non-touristic experience for their meaning.

Through analysis of these gazes Urry (2002) argues, like MacCannell (1976), that it is possible to gain an understanding of "aspects of normal practices that might otherwise remain opaque" (Urry, 2002:2). In a postmodern society, Urry (2002) takes up the concept of the "post-tourist." The post-tourist differs significantly from the tourist in three ways. First of all, the post-tourist does not require framing of the tourist gaze through a hotel window or a car window. Instead, the post-tourist can imagine themselves 'there' through technology like the television, internet and video. Secondly, the post-tourist is not restricted in the possibilities of her desire. Unlike MacCannell's (1976) tourist who is driven to find the authentic in a given locale, Urry's post-tourist moves easily and quickly between pleasure pursuits and high culture accepting contradiction and a multiplicity of interpretations. Finally, in contrast to self-identified travelers who reject the tourist role, the post-tourist accepts her role as a tourist, the multiplicity of tourist texts and the inevitable inauthenticity of tourist experiences.

Yet Urry's (1990) conceptualization of the post-tourist does not necessarily move beyond the anti-tourist perspectives that haunt travel, nor does it provide an alternative framework for understanding tourism as a benign practice:

> Post-tourism devolves into anti-tourist posturing in so far as it remains based on a role that somebody is conceived to have played or still be playing 'straight'. What is more, the touristy action done ironically is still done: and in a cultural practice which engages so many different material and bureaucratic forces and has so many economic, social, and cultural results, the effective difference between the ticket bought in irony and one bought in earnestness is surely negligible. Money is never ironic. Nor is power. (Buzard 1993:337)

This critique echoes contemporary debates in post-colonialism that refuse the construction of an agonistic (rather than antagonistic) relationship between the so-called colonizer and colonized (Parry, 2002).

Responding to criticisms of his text, Urry (2002) clarifies that his intent is not to account for the motivations of individual travelers, but to highlight the process of and relations behind the gaze:

> I emphasise that the systematic and regularised nature of various gazes, each of which depends upon a variety of social discourses and practices as well as on aspects of building, design and restoration that foster the necessary 'look' of a place or an environment. Such gazes implicate both the gazer and the gazee in an ongoing and systematic set of social and physical relations. (p.145; original emphasis)

Although Urry (2002) considers the social relations that produce these relations of the gaze (for instance, between professionals working in the travel industry and the representations they produce) and the physical relations between the gazer and gazee, the systems of power and exclusion that contextualize these relations are absent. The "systematic and regularised nature" of who is enabled to gaze and who is gazed upon is absent from Urry's analysis. Urry's theorizing of the operations of authenticity may hold for some examples that he incorporates into his text – for instance, the English seaside – but this theoretical framework of authenticity becomes more tenuous when considering travel to the Third World. Such travel, particularly when culturally-motivated, bears the persisting imprint of colonialism as travelers and tourists seek locals and cultural practices that are ostensibly traditional and uncontaminated by the practice of tourism itself.

Although many contemporary tourism scholars, including Urry, Rojek and Olsen, problematize conceptions of authenticity in tourism and the tourist experience, the desire for authenticity is still strong amongst many tourists. Tourists' conceptions of cultural authenticity are steeped in McClintock's (1995) "anachronistic space": tourists to the Third World in particular desire to gaze upon primitive cultures that have been unchanged and

uncontaminated by the increasing flow of information and people that enable travel (see Chapter 4).

Travelling the Third World

My project is rooted in a broader critique of the global tourism industry, particularly in the context of global tourism to the Third World. Tourism to the Third World is tied to structural inequalities that are constructed and reproduced through the flexible discourses of globalization and neo-colonialism.

With the increasing availability of inexpensive air travel, armchair tourism that brings representations of global cultures into people's homes with minimal effort, and increasing familiarity of Westerners with their home country and other Western countries, the desire for travel and culture has been displaced onto experience of the Third World (Azarya, 2004). This shift in focus, this search for exoticized difference marks a significant break from the expeditions of early explorers as remote difference is no longer sought by a small number of adventurers, but rather has entered the realm of ordinary travelers (Azarya, 2004). Moreover, it marks an embodied practice of tourism in which performativity is critical to the experience. Thus, it is no longer sufficient to see fixed tourist sights; travelers must experience the people and places to which they travel (Hutnyk, 1996). This travel is steeped in contradiction: the desire for the difference represented in the Third World operates in tension with desire for the comforts and amenities of home (Azarya, 2004). For instance, banana pancakes and toilet paper are both items that are easily found within backpacker ghettos in places like India and Thailand, but have little utility for and availability to many segments of the local population.

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In this way, travelers to Calcutta, to India, and the Third World more generally, repeat Gunew's (2004) observation that ethnicity is done best by those who are 'non-ethnic.' Paralleling Song Liling's statement in *M. Butterfly* that "only a man knows how a woman should act" (Hwang in Gunew, 2004:73), Gunew substitutes ethnicity for gender, "implying that only those who are the 'non-ethnic' audience for the spectacle of ethnicity know how an 'ethnic' should act in order to produce that spectacle, that theatrical display, 'authentically'" (2004:73). From such neo-colonial perspectives, Others are objectified idealizations, exotic peoples available for consumption and to help impose the boundaries through which categorical coherence emerges.

While some participants in my research had very individual reasons for going to India – Emma because she had been adopted from India; Katrin because she was attending a wedding; Jana to study yoga; and Shannel because she won a plane ticket – many of the other travelers explained their rationale for going to India in terms of its reputation.

> The mystique of India, there's a certain mystique, I think, attached to India, it's such a blend of everything, you know there's.... Well, being from Australia and being a colony of Britain and India being in the same situation, I was interested in seeing how they've coped with the whole British influence and maintained their own identity and all the rest of it. (Ian)

> Because everybody been in India. And they told me that India is so amazing and so beautiful and everybody have to go to India to see it. (Daniel)

> Originally it was for my friend's wedding, right, and uh, I guess that could've been only like a week long to do that. But I chose to st-, to stick around for four months because it's such a bizarre place and uh, totally different from Canada and uh, it's nice to see new culture, which Canada doesn't have at all, culture really, so it's nice to see the extreme history and the um, uh I don't know just the bizarre, I guess in India. You hear stories about from other travellers. (Conrad)

> My brother, came out here about 20 years ago and really loved it, you know. That was probably the first thing that got me interested in it all those years ago. (Liam)

Raz, Simon, Sara, Lexi and Rina also decided to go to India because of the reputation it has – either as a general representation or amongst people who had previously traveled there. In this way, India as an exotic locale preceded, and informed, many travelers' travel plans.

In addition to these reasons, travelers pointed out the colonial legacies that enabled their travel to India. The legacies identified included both currency exchange and language. Lexi, Daniel, Liam, and Gal pointed out the ways in which the "cheap money" (Daniel) made it possible for them to travel. Moreover, the widespread use of English in India was also a factor for several travelers:

> The language barrier also helps here a lot. More people, you know local people are trying to speak English so, that makes things a little bit easier. (Liam)

These reasons cited by the travelers were in many ways the same reasons that drew me to India as a research site. Because of the prevalence of English, I assumed (most often correctly) that most of the travelers I encountered would speak some English. As a result, I was able to do all of my interviews in English. My travel was also facilitated by the currency exchange between Canada and India, an exchange that enabled me to conduct three months of fieldwork on a modest research grant from the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta. In addition, I was interested in a place that had a reputation as being both culturally distinct, in order to accentuate the relationships between Self and Other, as well as difficult, so that it enabled the processes of self-development and attracted people who were invested in travel as a challenge, rather than an opportunity to party.

'Unruly' Others

Although Indians are assumed by many travelers to be spectacles for consumption, this object status is refused by many Indians. In compelling research, both Maoz (2006) and Doron (2005) challenge the Western-centric conception of Indian 'hosts' as passive objects that are actively negotiated by Western travelers. In order to protect their interests as they become more familiar with tourists and tourists' expectations, many local Indians working in the tourism industry align with the expected spectacle of peaceful, happy people who hold the secret to a spiritually fulfilled life (Maoz, 2006). Through this "veiled resistance" (Maoz, 2006), many Indians with little or no training take up positions as Babas and Gurus who offer to help Western travelers live a more spiritual life (Maoz, 2006) and through these spiritual positions, participate successfully in the tourist economy. In this context, the powerful, agentic subject position of the tourist is subverted by the locals:

> As opposed to the view that sees tourists as rational, independent, and powerful actors, this article suggests that they are targets of manipulation, staging, and of the gaze of the host population, as they operate in a strange place, and are very visible to the inhabitants in their enclaves. (Doron, 2005:225).

Not only is the Indian gazed upon, but so is the tourist. In Varanasi, a highly organized infrastructure exists through which boatmen control tourists' experiences, without the awareness of these tourists (including domestic tourists) (Doron, 2005). Not only does a formal infrastructure control tourists' first encounters with a particular boatman, but tourists then engage in actively negotiated relationships with this boatman. An invitation to the boatman's home for dinner and to meet his family, for instance, enables a boatman to demonstrate his 'sincerity' and build a relationship from which further guiding opportunities may emerge, at the same time that it capitalizes on the desire of Western tourists for the cultural capital they can claim through a meal in the house of a local.

In spite of this utilitarianism by Indians working in the tourism industry, the relations between boatmen and their clients are contextualized by broader inequities of mobility and economics: not only does the tourist have the opportunity to travel internationally (institutionalized through international currency exchanges and visa requirements), but even within the city of Varanasi, guide licenses restrict the locations in which boatmen can accompany tourists (Doron, 2005). Thus, even within local terrains, the mobilities of boatman and tourists are embedded in neo-colonial legacies that advantage the mobility and experiences of the Western traveler at the expense of local guides.

These examples of Indians working as 'unskilled' labour in the tourism industry provide useful analyses of negotiations of tourist relations within the Third World. These relations are further complicated by the contextualization of Western travel to the Third World in its obverse: travel from the Third World to the First. In her research on Nepali mountaineers, Frohlick (2003) was struck by the mobilities of elite Nepali mountaineer Babu Chirri Sherpa, mobilities that paralleled those of the Western mountaineers who represented the sport. Although these mobilities appear to undermine the asymmetries between the Varanasi boatmen and the tourists whom they service (Doron, 2005), Frohlick (2003) demonstrates that even when neo-colonial inequalities of mobility and wealth are transgressed, discursive boundaries are imposed. Babu Chirri Sherpa attended the 2000 "Mountain Summit" in Banff, Canada as an elite mountaineer with transnational mobility similar to that of his Western counterparts. Yet, at the festival his accomplishments were minimized as his climbing experience was assumed to be limited to Mount Everest and he was ultimately excluded from the prestigious category of "mountaineer" (Frohlick, 2003).

Taken together, these three analyses suggest the failure of Western travelers to be self-conscious of and self-reflexive about their role in tourist relations, their lack of critical reflection upon the representations of the locals upon whom their travel depends, and their inattention to the subjectivities of the 'colonized'. They point to the (neo-)colonizers' immunity against locating themselves in a colonial situation (Behdad, 1994), an immunity established through the sweeping discourse of liberalism with its emphasis on acontextualized individuals.

Speaking to a similar lack of reflection in the context of British colonialism in India, Viswanathan identifies the logical tautology that undermines (neo)colonial representations of India and Indians:

> It is not generally realized how infinitely more binding the tyranny of representation can be on the colonizer than it is on the colonized, for if the colonial subject is a construct emanating from the colonizer's head, and therefore removed from history, the history to which the British administrator responds – the impending 'event' to which his measures are so critically attached – is real only to the extent that it provides the rationale for his actions (1989:12).

In the context of contemporary travel practices and transnational mobilities, the colonial subject (read as a colonial object) is similarly a "construct emanating from the colonizer's head" and thus the cultural difference and authenticity that give meaning to cultural travel to the Third World are only real insomuch as they justify these travels. Yet given the structures within which such constructions take place, there are material and discursive consequences for those colonial objects.

The inherent fragility of these constructions of traveled Others is evident through the uncomfortable contradictions that permeate encounters between travelers and Indians. For instance, although poverty is actively sought by many travelers to India (Hutnyk, 1996), many travelers are uncomfortable when asked for money by beggars-*cum*-traveled Others

(see Chapter 6). These dissonant constructions both buttress and undermine colonial narratives and practices and are rooted in similarly incongruent historical constructions. In the 19th century, Indians were represented as morally and intellectually deficient, attributes which justified colonial intervention, and at the same time as volatile and unstable, characteristics that "doomed British rulers to inhabiting an imagined, dreaded world of imminent rebellion and resistance" (Viswanathan, 1989:11).

In contemporary independent travel to India, travelers who give little reflection to both their relationship to their travels and to representations of the people they encounter are troubled by their complicity in regimes of global inequality as well as the subjectivity of ostensibly object-Indians. A là Morrison (1993) who argues that American literature speaks to Blackness even when black bodies are not explicitly present, the construction of the Other as object of tourist gazes and tourist experiences is troubled by the agentic subjectivities of these Others (see Chapter 6). The resulting volatility that inheres in tourist practices is negotiated through the social construction of innocence, a narrative that denies both the object status imposed upon Others and the significance of contextual disparities between those Others and independent travelers.

Innocence in Global Travel

For independent travel, innocence is manifested in part through the active differentiations from mass tourism. However, as an alternative form, independent travel remains embedded in the problematic foundations of tourism more generally. Even alternative forms of travel that are explicitly based on benevolence and altruism are complicated by their relationship to capitalism, the same relationship that many travelers emphasize in their critique of mass tourism:

> Budget or 'alternative' travel, like the alternative trade promoted by many organized aid groups, can be criticized as an illusion of 'nice' cottage capitalism, soothing ideological anxieties while extending commercialization and the tourism industry. Rather than working towards social transformation, alternative travel and charity work seems often to tinker at the edges of capitalist expansion into new market niches. (Hutnyk, 1996:x)

As evidenced by Hutnyk's critique, independent travel actively invokes what Pratt (1992) coins "anti-conquest." In response to earlier travel and exploration writings that were steeped in the older imperialist discourses, Pratt argues that in the 18th century, new narratives of travel emerged that dissociated the travel writers from their complicity in colonial projects. She defines anti-conquest as "the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (Pratt, 1992:7). In the 19th century, travel writings tended to centre the intentions and the personal attributes of the tourist, thereby neglecting

> Any critical perspective capable of doing justice to the highly attenuated form of responsibility tourists bore towards the places affected by their presence and the institutions that enabled it. (Buzard, 1993:13)

These logics that construct innocence by distancing travelers from the potentially negative aspects of their travel are deeply embedded in the rubric of independent travel. Like those who engaged in anti-conquest in the 19th century, independent travelers narrate their experiences through an individualist lens, thereby decontextualizing their travel (see Noy, 2004). In addition, travelers actively negotiate the radical inequalities that mark contact zones in ways which minimize the gross inequalities between themselves and the Others they seek (see Chapter 4). Frequently, these negotiations take up the discourses of liberalism and multiculturalism, discourses which emphasize individualism and the celebration of diversity, respectively, outside of power-laden contexts (Bannerji, 2000), a decontextualization that actively abets social constructions of innocence.

The very notion of innocence – even if it is attainable – has been problematized. In Toni Morrison's fiction, for instance, "innocence is itself a sign of guilt, because it signals a degenerate acquiescence" to a society organized by an oppressive order of domination and marginalization (Otten, 1989:4). Innocence has also been implicated in the second-wave feminist movement (Flax, 1992). The practices of innocence upon which second-wave politics depends operates through an Enlightenment metanarrative infused with liberalism that designates ostensibly objective knowledge as innocent. That is, truth claims about women's status or knowledge will bring about the end of women's domination. Yet the innocent truth that will bring about this change is actually a means to claim and invoke additional power within a system that remains predicated on exclusion (Flax, 1992). In the context of independent travel, truth is articulated through the search for authentic culture and an essential self.

The significance of Enlightenment narratives in the construction of innocence is not limited to truth. Enlightenment ideals underpin liberalist discourses of individual freedom, self-development, reason, and equality of opportunity (Hampton, 1997). However, with its emphasis upon the individual, liberalism obscures the systems of difference that form the bases of marginalization. Through its particular modes of negotiating difference, and thus inequality, liberalism reproduces an equality – and thus justification of innocence – upon a regime of disenfranchisement.

In the context of liberalist practices, power is mundane to the point that it is often unrecognizable by those who wield it. And yet it is very fragile. Independent travel is dependent upon claims that promote equality (through practices of cultural sensitivity and cultural responsibility) in order to maintain a moral distinction from mass tourism. Yet the very practice of travel from First to Third World, the spectacle of poverty upon which it is

predicated, and its refusal of the subjectivities of those who live in traveled locations together point to the ways in which this travel is dependent upon inequalities and is ultimately tangled in exploitative global relations. This unstable basis, the basis of benignity that justifies the reproduction of power is always at risk of being uncovered as fraudulent.

Claims of innocence are used to buttress existing power relations. Yet through this reinforcement, they also point to the tenuousness of systems of marginalization and exclusion. As such, constructions of innocence are a means to understanding the operations of these inequalities as well as the narratives of exculpation invoked to protect the neo-colonial relations in a range of forms.

METHODS

In the fall of 2005, I traveled to India with my sister to conduct the ethnographic research for this project. For just under three months, we toured through India choosing 'off-the-beaten-track' places with (ironically) high numbers of independent travelers. Our choice of locations was based on routes outlined in the *Lonely Planet*, travel advice from other travelers, and the infrastructure that supported independent travelers. We left Delhi, our arrival point, and began with a tour of Rajasthan with a hired driver. From Rajasthan, we took the train to Mumbai for a few days, and then headed further south along the Western coast to Goa where we stayed at Palolem beach. For this project, I was interested in independent travelers who understood their travel as an intercultural interaction and an opportunity for personal growth and development. Travelers who viewed India as a cheap locale for their revelling experiences were not high priorities for me and so I actively chose not to travel to places, such as Anjuna, with reputations as party locales. Notably, I still encountered, and conducted a couple of interviews with, travelers who understood India as

their playground, a place in which to do what they wanted, when they wanted, frequently involving the use of illegal narcotics.

After 10 days in Goa, our longest stay in any one place, my travel partner and I headed inland, at the strong suggestion of several travelers we had met, who insisted that we go inland to Hampi because of its unusual landscape and abundance of activities for independent travelers. From Hampi, we continued south to Bangalore and then returned to the west coast. Our trip from Bangalore took us into Kerala, where we stayed at Fort Cochin, before taking a boat ride from Allapuzah to our final destination, the beach at Varkala.

Along the way, I met travelers in restaurants, hotels, and trains and while participating in activities like visiting museums, touring ruins and taking boat rides. Several people were introduced to the study by other participants, giving the sample something of a snowball effect. In addition to engaging in participant observation throughout my trip, I conducted formal interviews with 29 travelers and with two of those travelers on multiple occasions. The majority of the interviews were conducted individually, but one was conducted with a couple (Emma and Karl), and another with an individual in front of a group of his friends, as was his preference. Of the 29 travelers I interviewed, six were from Australia, seven from Canada and the United States, ten from Europe, and six from Israel. The travelers ranged from 19 years old to their early 40s and the total group was relatively evenly split into men and women. Most of the travelers, 19 of them, were in India for their first time and the remainder had been before. I spoke to travelers at a range of points in their travels, from newly arrived to departing shortly, and their trips ranged in duration from one month to indefinite, with two to three months as the average duration of travel.

Chapter Sketches

My methodological approach and addition to providing a theoretical framework for the research methods I employed, I argue transience as it both complicated and facilitated my research. There is little methodological literature on transience and, as a result, this analysis makes an important contribution to the scholarship on qualitative field methods.

The subsequent chapters take up the social construction of innocence through a range of lenses. Chapter 3 sets out the general framework from which the dissertation continues. This chapter elaborates the articulations between tourism and travel and between travel and innocence that have been briefly addressed above. This chapter also situates independent travel in a neo-colonial context based on travelers' narratives of their understandings of themselves as travelers.

These understandings are analyzed against travelers' understanding of Indians and India in Chapter 4. While the third chapter focuses on travelers' understandings of themselves and their own subject positions as those who travel, the fourth chapter takes up the significance of those who are the ostensible objects of this travel. In contrast to the critique of authenticity put forward to scholars of travel and tourism, this chapter explores travelers' persisting desire for stereotypical authenticity. Based on descriptions of their best experiences and their conceptualizations of 'real India' (a phrase introduced by an early participant), the independent travelers I spoke with continually reiterated Orientalist stereotypes about India and Indians, as well as their desire to get away from other travelers so as to access uncontaminated cultural experiences.

In Chapter 5 I turn to crisis moments to consider the social construction of innocence. This chapter turns on the tension between women's experiences of sexual

harassing white women. This chapter takes up the complicated tensions that emerge when Indian men and Western women struggle to negotiate power relations in a neo-colonial structure that privileges Western men and obscures Indian women.

As a contrast, Chapter 6 considers a reversal of power. Taking those moments in which travelers are confronted by poverty, this chapter investigates the inversion of the assumed gaze. Although travelers expect to gaze upon the poverty that makes India 'real,' this poverty is embodied by agents who observe travelers. By analyzing travelers' responses to those moments in which they are confronted with their relative wealth, this chapter highlights the fragility of the constructions of innocence that provide the foundation for an ostensibly non-exploitative form of travel.

Concluding Remarks

This research is not a project on responsibility or the possibilities for more innocent or more responsible travel (see Nowicka, 2007 for some suggestions). Rather, my research is a theoretically-informed empirical engagement with globalization and colonialism against a backdrop of global political economy and liberalism that takes up independent travel to India as a lens through which to analyze these complicated relations. The travelers who I interviewed and who I cite throughout my dissertation were not (often) overtly racist, sexist, or colonialist. Yet their commentaries on their travel experiences and travel often contributed to the powerfully flexible discourses of colonialism. The strength of Orientalism as an efficient discursive power rests in "the all-inclusiveness of its

My critical approach is not an attempt to undermine the potentially positive aspects for individuals who participate in intercultural travel. Rather, it sits alongside scholarship including Harrison (2003) on the pleasure of tourist travel and Chen (2008) on the beneficial possibilities of transculturation through travel, scholarship that takes travel as a practice through which individuals can grow and experience pleasure. Our work, then, is mutually complicating. While their work complicates mine through their focus on the positive aspects of travel, and the good that can come from learning another culture and from challenging yourself in different contexts, my research complicates theirs by highlighting the ways in which travel, even with the best of intentions, is located within and often reproductive of broader systems of inequality and exclusion.

II. Ethnography of Transience

In this methodological reflection, I provide a more detailed sketch of my research methods, incorporating my techniques and decision-making practices into reflexive perspectives on the researcher's relationship to the field and to her ethnographic participants. In particular, I focus on transience as a concept that was prominent in my research and that troubled several assumptions of more traditional forms of ethnography. I draw from recent debates about fieldwork in anthropology to problematize theoretical notions of 'the field' and to highlight some practical implications of mobility through ethnographic spaces with attention to the implications for sociological ethnography. These physical disruptions have significance for interpersonal engagements which are critical to, for example, locating participants and conducting interviews. In these ways, my ethnographic fieldwork with independent travelers posed significant challenges to conventional practices of ethnography that assume either a relatively fixed locale or group constitution. I conclude these reflections by considering the implications of my physical and social locations for knowledge production, by considering Indian landscapes and my gendered, racialized, classed and aged subject positions as traveler and researcher.

In addition to situating my project, this methodological chapter speaks to the scholarship on travel and tourism more broadly. Although tourism is growing as a substantive area of investigation, there are few texts that provide in-depth attention to the theoretical and pragmatic methodological issues that are unique to, or exacerbated by, the study of tourism.[5] Several authors who have conducted fieldwork with tourists have

[5] The edited collection by Phillimore and Goodson (2004) provides an important text that takes a qualitative perspective on tourism and elaborates many theoretical aspects associated with qualitative research (such as ontology and reflexivity) in the context of tourist research. Yet a significant purpose of this text is to carve out the theoretical space for qualitative investigation in tourism research, which has been dominated (from

included short methodological sections to frame their substantive discussions. However, these methodological pieces are often minimal in their analysis of the impact of transience on the researcher's fieldwork. For instance, Duffy's (2004) work on ecotourism includes the number of tourists and locals interviewed in a footnote, the only reference made to data collection. Kontogeorgopoulos (2003) provides a solid context for the tourist sites, the tourist companies and the types of tourist he chose for his analysis of backpacking in Thailand, but does not explain either how he made contact with the organizations or individuals or how the actual interviewing process took place. In their articles on travelers' perceptions of authenticity in Thailand, neither Conran (2006) nor Palmer (1998) refer in any way to their methodologies.

Some tourism scholars have included more detailed reference to their methodological decisions and obstacles. Harrison (2003) found her desire to interview tourists in Hawaii was limited by their reluctance to give up their leisure time and instead opted to focus on the integration of travel experiences into the daily lives of tourists who had returned home. Spreitzhofer (2002, 1998) reflects on his desires to keep interviews casual by not using a recording device for his narrative interviews with backpackers in south-east Asia. In his tellingly titled article "Backpacker Ethnography," Sorenson (2003) addressed the ways in which he identified participants and his self-reflexivity regarding his status as both a backpacker and a researcher. In spite of the methodological elaborations by these authors, there remains a lack of in-depth attention to the implications of transience, necessarily characteristic of independent travel, for tourism-based research. It is this silence in the literature that I hope to begin to address.

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their perspective) by more positivist, quantitative-based research. Thus, much of the book responds to positivist modes of inquiry through its theorizing, rather than elaborating nuanced qualitative methodology that combines theory and practice in the field of tourism.

Overview of Methods

Through my fieldwork, I was actively involved in participant observation, unstructured informal conversations, and more formal semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1 – Interview Schedule). As a researcher, the destinations that I visited were those that drew other travelers (see Appendix 2 – Participant Biographies) – the very reason these destinations were desirable to me. As a traveler within these destinations, I was often able to participate in conversations and interactions between travelers. In addition, I was provided with the opportunity to make observations about travelers' behaviour. These observations were enabled by shared spaces, not least because a significant portion of travel takes place in public spaces. This publicity combined with the large amount of time during which I had no scheduled activities enabled me to sit, watch, and engage in casual conversations, typically within a guesthouse or restaurant. Not infrequently, this sitting, watching and casual conversing culminated in a formal interview; interviews with Sophie, Mick, Daniel, and Gal occurred this way. With other travelers, including Emma, Karl, Liam, Conrad, and Vasu, participation in a shared tourist activity, such as going to the beach, visiting a museum or attending a cultural show[6] resulted in much quicker and direct introductions, including the introduction to my research. The last important way through which participants were recruited was through other participants. The participants were sometimes introduced by Indians I knew and to whom I had explained my project (see "Traveler Networks" below). I met Peter, Sara and Julia in this way. Participants were introduced by independent travelers with whom I'd already

[6] Admittedly, participation in "touristic activities" often overlapped significantly with sitting, watching, and casual conversation.

conducted an interview. The travelers I met through other traveling participants include Anton, Eli, Rina, Shannel, Leah, and Susan.

Once travelers agreed to participate, the interviews focused on the connections travelers made between their individual experiences and the global context of neo-colonialism (including national, racial and class privilege) within which their travel took place. Individuals' descriptions and explanations of events and stories contain the broader shared, though often unspoken, logics upon which travelers draw to understand their experiences and observations as well as to locate those within a coherent subculture (Sorenson, 2003). Informed by critical discourse analysis perspective (Mills, 1997), I understand these narratives, ranging from descriptions to speculations, to be tied not only to the logics of independent travel, but also to broader patterns of colonialism and patriarchy. Colonial legacies and patriarchy help to define India as 'exotic' and thus make travel to India meaningful. In addition, these systems of exclusion and inequality are pervasive globally, albeit in different forms, and therefore provide a continuous thread through which Westerners can construct a coherent understanding of Other cultures. Colonialism and patriarchy are further embedded in the ideologies of liberalism (Goldberg, 1993; Bannerji, 2000, respectively) and capitalism (Alfred, 1999; Mies, 1986, respectively) that underpin such systems of inequality and exclusion. A broad critique at these multiple levels forms the framework for my analysis.

Ethnographic Negotiations

The impetus for independent travel is not unlike that motivating fieldwork in overseas, off-the-beaten-path locales. Both my research and travel practices were hailed into being through an extended period away from 'home' enabled by my nationality, access

to institutional funding, and limited obligations at home. Together, these factors contributed to international fieldwork that has provided academic status (see "A Field of Others?" below) as I set out to an exotic locale in order to experience international fieldwork and build my academic credentials through (the struggle of) three months of fieldwork (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997).

India: An Exotic Field?

India was an appropriate locale for my research because of its reputation as a travel destination for independent travel (see Chapter 4). India is marked by its ostensible scarcity and primitiveness, which together construct a framework of hardship through which research and travel experiences can be narrated and subsequently judged by other audiences. In addition, India has a well-known colonial history, creating opportunities for resonances between past and contemporary forms of (neo)colonialism. Persisting vestiges of colonialism, such as the willingness to grant international visas, the low exchange rate of the Indian rupee, and the wide-spread presence of English enable travel and/or research to citizens of many (over)developed countries on a relatively low budget, without speaking local languages.

Yet this construction of India as a 'field' – a faraway place from which both researcher and traveler are entirely removed in their daily lives – is one of contention. A growing dialogue within the discipline of anthropology has critiqued the traditional assumptions by which 'the field' has been, and continues in many instances to be, designated as distinct from both the 'home' of the researcher (Caputo, 2000) and the researcher herself. There is a growing body of scholarship that emphasizes the centrality of the researcher in (re)producing 'the field,' as "an active, situated, participant in the

construction of accounts and representations" (Turner, 2000:51). The researcher does not just influence the events within the field and the narratives of the field that are produced, but also the very construction of 'the field' (Amit, 2000). This process actively dissociates the researcher from global entanglements in order to create the difference and separation appropriate for ethnographic encounters, as well as for independent travel:

> The notion of immersion implies that the 'field' which ethnographers enter exists as an independently bounded set of relationships and activities which is autonomous of the fieldwork through which it is discovered. Yet in a world of infinite interconnections and overlapping contexts, the ethnographic field cannot simply exist, awaiting discovery. It has to be labouriously constructed, prised apart from all other possibilities for contextualization to which its constituent relationships and connections could also be referred. This process of construction is inescapably shaped by the conceptual, professional, financial and relational opportunities and resources available to the researcher. Seen from this perspective, an idea of fieldwork in which the ethnographer is expected to break from his/her usual involvements in order to immerse him/herself in the 'field' of others' involvements is an oxymoron. (Amit, 2000:6)

A Field of Others?

The challenges posed to traditional conceptions of 'the field' have emerged alongside the discussions of the Orientalist perspective that haunts anthropological fieldwork. Contemporary debates have disrupted this traditionalist notion of culture and space and have foregrounded the ethnographer as an active participant in the construction and delineation of the boundaries of any 'field,' be it by way of culture, ethnicity or geography. Although post-modern approaches to anthropology and ethnography question the notion of 'the field' both theoretically and pragmatically, a hierarchical purity of spaces persists, in which spaces are valued based on their distance, exoticism and strangeness relative to 'home' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997:13).

Contemporary anthropologists continue to struggle to justify research that does not take place in 'exotic' locales, with 'bounded' cultures and geographies (Kurotani, 2004; Muir 2004; Caputo, 2000). The traditional 'field' remains steeped not only in an Orientalist presumption of difference but, resonating with independent travel, this cultural difference is expected to be spatially removed from the ethnographer's home (Norman, 2000). For instance, because her research practices did not align with the disciplinary norms of anthropology, which recognize 'geographic areas' of specialization and the 'journey' or 'rites of passage' associated with research abroad, Caputo (2000) experienced institutionalized difficulties negotiating ethnographic research she undertook in her own city. Muir (2004) also struggled to conduct research from his home setting. By choosing to study followers of New Age spiritualism, "'the field' turned out to be elusive – neither located in one place nor commensurate with any delimited community" (2004:189).

Both of these researchers confronted what Gupta and Ferguson identify as "the question of spatialization of difference. The unspoken premise that 'home' is a place of cultural sameness and that difference is to be found 'abroad' has long been part of the common sense of anthropology" (1997:32), an assumption that pervades both research and travel. This presumption of spatial relocation as necessary to the ethnographic research process is actively reproduced through narratives of completed fieldwork (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997) as well as in instructional methodological texts (e.g. DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002; Lofland and Lofland, 1995) in which researchers emphasize their transitions between the spaces of 'home' and 'the field.' In this format, the construction of rituals of "entry" and "exit" buttress researcher claims to the authenticity of their fieldwork[7] in ways

[7] Notably, this authenticity is constituted not only through differentiation from the alleged sameness of 'home,' but also through the funding necessary to undertake research in exotic locales (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997).

that parallel the emphases on culture shock and reverse culture shock in narratives of travel.

Critically, the notion of 'entry' and 'exit' also function to obscure the globalized relations in which researchers and participants are engaged prior to research. The ethnographic Other must be actively sculpted as distinct from, and unrelated to, the researcher. This separation must not only be spatial, but also articulated culturally through the minimized contamination of ethnographic subjects (see Chapter 4):

> Although anthropologists no longer think in terms of natural or undisturbed states, it remains evident that what many would deny in theory continues to be true in practice: some places are much more 'anthropological' than others (e.g. Africa more than Europe, southern Europe more than northern Europe, villages more than cities) according to the degree of Otherness from an archetypal anthropological 'home.' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997:13)

As the practices of anthropological ethnography and independent travel turn on the spectacle of a cultural Other, both have been implicated in the persisting legacies of colonialism.[8] As a response, my research invokes a heuristic distinction to shift the focus to those who *view* the Other – independent travelers and, for the purposes of this chapter, researchers – rather than the Other being *viewed*. Yet as a researcher, I was still responsible for the active construction of this category. Independent travelers do not constitute a coherent group, nor do they occupy a stable space (Sorenson, 2003).

Given the very large number of travelers and thus potential participants for my project, I actively constructed the category of "independent travelers," a construction that, according to Amit (2000), more accurately represents a 'field':

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[8] These connections between travel and colonial legacies are taken up in Chapter 3, "Travel and Colonialism." In anthropology, see Said (1979) as well as Dirks (2004), Lacy and Douglass (2002) and Lewis (1973).

> My 'field' would be defined in terms of a social category that I have singled out rather than a self-conscious social group, whose members are interacting with one another on an ongoing basis, independently of my intervention. Such a shift renders the ethnographer an even more central agent in the construction of the 'field.' (p.14)

Based on preliminary conversations with people, I pursued as participants those travelers with some level of commitment to culturally sensitive travel and personal growth. This construction parallels the prototypical backpacker defined in the *Lonely Planet* (see Chapter 3), and is based on the purposeful exclusion of hedonistic travelers noted in the introduction.

Borders, Identities, and Mobilities

At the same time that conceptualizations of the 'field' and the 'Other' are increasingly interrogated, so too are conceptions of researcher and participant transnational identities and associated mobilities. Again, there are parallels between the practices of researchers and travelers, as each define themselves against a presumably less knowledgeable and integrated Other.

For the participants in my study, their identity as "independent travelers" was defined to a significant extent through its differentiation from the blind consumption and cultural isolation of mass tourism (see Chapter 3). While other scholarship on alternative forms of travel has categorized low-budget, long-term, independently-organized travel as backpacking (e.g. Richards and Wilson 2004; Sorenson 2003; Kontogeorgopoulos 2003; Spreitzhofer 2002), many of the participants in my research refused the label because of the negative connotations associated with backpacking. The people with whom I spoke – who I actively selected to construct a 'field' of somewhat socially conscious travelers – were interested in travel as a means to self-development and made active attempts to

participate in travel that was socially responsible and culturally sensitive. This form of travel, many of them indicated, contrasted with the hedonistic behaviours they associated with backpacking in which people traveled to inexpensive locales to imbibe in cheap drugs and partying. For independent travelers, both pleasure-prioritizing travelers and oblivious tourists constituted more proximate Others through which they could construct themselves. Following from these distinctions, I used the term "independent travel" to highlight the efforts of the participants to overcome not only the neo-coloniality associated with mass tourism to the Third World (Mowforth and Munt, 2003), but also the neo-coloniality associated with hedonistic travel.

Similarly, the identity of a researcher is based on differentiation from tourists and travelers more generally. Like independent travelers who go to great lengths to differentiate themselves from tourists on the grounds of increased depth and authenticity of experience (see Chapters 3 and 4), some anthropologists claim similar distinction. For anthropologists engaging in cultural fieldwork, this distinction is substantiated, to a great extent, through their affiliation with a formalized post-secondary institution, yet draws on discourses of intimacy and participation in everyday life, the same discourses elaborated by travelers in their descriptions of authentic experiences (Chapter 4):

> 'Fieldwork' is a form of dwelling that legitimizes knowledge production by the familiarity that the fieldworkers gains with the ways of life of a group of people. Unlike travelers and tourists, the fieldworker has experience, obtained by staying a long time, learning the language well, and participating in everyday life, which authorizes his or her discourse. (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997:31-32).

This search for intimate knowledge of the mundane aspects of cultural Others is critical to traditional forms of anthropology, like that undertaken by Bronislaw Malinowski and Margaret Mead, paralleling travelers' desire for intimacy with cultural Others (Chapter 4).

These traveler and researcher identities, based on hierarchical relationships of knowledge of and intimacy with the cultural object Other that provides the basis for travel or research, are complicated by the manifestation of agency and subjectivity of the so-called cultural Others. Recent scholarship has begun to reflect on the ways in which transnational mobilities disrupt Western identities that are built upon an Other that is traveled, but does not travel. Both Frohlick (2006) and Appadurai's historian partner (1991) were surprised to learn that informants they had considered 'local' shared similarly transnational mobilities to their own. On a trip to the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, India where Appadurai's partner had previously conducted research, she learned that her primary contact had moved to Houston, Texas. Similarly, upon returning from her fieldwork in the Himalaya, Frohlick encountered a Nepali mountaineer at the Banff Centre for Mountain Culture in Canada and realized that he possessed the same transnational cosmopolitanism as the mostly white, middle class, Western adventure travelers and mountaineers at the event. These transnational mobilities highlight the global mobilities at play within a given ethnographic project (Frohlick, 2006), mobilities that constitute further challenges to traditional conceptions of 'the field.'

Sociological Ethnography

The debates which have led to these more nuanced conceptualizations of researchers' relationships to the 'field', the 'Other,' and transnational mobilities have taken place primarily within the discipline of anthropology. However, these anthropological critiques have important consequences for the research practices of other disciplines. In the mid 1990s, Marcus proposed multi-sited ethnography as a means by which "to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse space-time"

(1995:96). Elaborating the political possibilities of such multi-sited ethnography, Burawoy (2000) extends Marcus' recognition of the embeddedness of ethnographers in their fields and call for ethnography that is not bound by the nation-state. Rather than fixed national boundaries, Burawoy (2000) emphasizes the dynamic material effects of global forces, the global connections between multiple research sites, and the demystification of globalization as a hegemonic force in the interests of a non-objectifying ethnography that promotes the possibility of change.

For sociology, growing interest in the political and economic processes and flows related to globalization are paralleled by related social flows of people (such as researchers and travelers) across national boundaries (Young, 2006). The transnationalization of the production of goods such as food and clothing alongside the growing transnationalization of the service sector (for instance, overseas call centres) highlight these connections between employers and employees, producers and consumers as they participate in systems that prioritize the export of goods and services for the consumption of citizens of wealthy countries. It is in this context that the calls by Burawoy (2000), a sociologist, to emphasize the bonds between physically distinct geographies have challenged the disciplinary boundaries between anthropological and sociological fieldwork. This disruption corresponds with work that underlines the role of the researcher in constructing both the field and the Other (Amit, 2000).

The Social Organization of Independent Travel and Logistics of Research

The methodological theorizing and techniques appropriate for my project are dependent upon the characteristics of the group that I studied: independent travelers. Independent travelers constitute a subculture without a fixed population or locale

(Sorenson, 2003). In place of more formal infrastructures, the practices of independent travel are mediated through travel guides (here I focus on the *Lonely Planet* because of its overwhelming presence), through transience, through norms and policing of appearance and behaviour, and finally, through the distinction of travel, as leisure, from the realm of productive work. Each of these factors had an impact on my methodological decision-making.

The Lonely Planet

As noted in the introduction, the *Lonely Planet* guidebook is a cornerstone of independent travel. This book was referenced by several of the travelers I met as "the bible." In almost every restaurant with foreigners, there was a *Lonely Planet* in plain view and virtually every traveler eating alone was reading the *Lonely Planet*. By providing practical information including how to move between cities, maps of cities, brief overviews of tourist highlights, and commentaries on local hotels and eateries, this book mediates the transience of travelers. Coverage in the Lonely Planet has an extremely significant impact, which can be either positive or negative, on travelers' willingness to stay at particular hotels or eat at certain restaurants. Although travelers move long distances with relative spontaneity, the places to which they travel are strongly influenced by the coverage of their travel guide. Because of this influence, my travel route was roughly mapped by the *Lonely Planet's* suggestions for places to go.

For instance, although I knew I wanted to go to Goa because of its reputation as a major backpacking destination, I was unsure where within Goa I wanted to go. Based on the description in the *Lonely Planet*, I chose Palolem: "This is Goa's 'paradise lost' according to some. Palolem is still the most idyllic beach in the state, but it's fast filling up

with travelers and the businesses set up to service them" (Singh *et al.*, 2003:804). Although the beach itself was far more overdeveloped than the book had suggested, many of the travelers I encountered in Palolem arrived with the same expectations as to what they would find and several of them were disappointed with the beach they encountered. Their response to this discrepancy was itself a productive point of exploration (see Chapter 4).

One of the major contributions of the *Lonely Planet's* coverage of travel destinations, both for travelers generally as well as for myself as a researcher seeking to meet travelers, is its sketch of the 'backpacker ghetto' in each city. With few exceptions, cities included in the *Lonely Planet* have a small centre, generally close to a market or transportation hub, in which there is an abundance of cheap accommodation and restaurants, as well as a variety of services for travelers, including internet, currency exchange, massage, mehndi and souvenir shops. For example:

> In Old Delhi you'll find the main Inter State Bus Terminal (ISBT) near Kashmiri Gate and to the south, the New Delhi train station. Near this station, acting as a sort of buffer zone between the old and new cities, is Paharganj, the budget travellers' hang-out. (Singh *et al.* 2003:172)

As a result, the guidebook provides an informal infrastructure within which travelers (and researchers) are likely to encounter one another, simply by occupying the same physical spaces including hotels and restaurants, but also streets and public spaces more generally. For many of the amenities in the centres that cater to travelers, the Lonely Planet comments not only on their availability, but also passes judgment on the quality of goods and services they provide (Bhattacharyya, 1997). This judgment turns on the grassroots orientation of the book. The Lonely Planet markets itself on acknowledging and incorporating its readers' feedback:

> We genuinely value your feedback. A well-travelled team at Lonely Planet reads and acknowledges every email and letter we receive and ensures that every morsel of information finds its way to the relevant authors, editors and cartographers. Everyone who writes to us will find their name list in the next edition of the appropriate guidebook. The very best contributions will be rewarded with a free guidebook (Singh *et al.*, 2003:16)

Together, the bound edition of the guidebook and its online Thorn Tree travel forum reinforce the notion that Indians working in the tourism industry cannot be trusted to provide fair, accurate or unbiased information and that, instead of risking compromised information, travelers' best option is to trust only each other either in person or in text. As a result of their short-term stays in a range of places, many travelers feel vulnerable to the schemes of untrustworthy tourist guides or travel agents and choose instead to consult fellow travelers, assumed to be comrades against the shady efforts of certain locals (see Chapter 4).

Transience

This high place:time ratio is itself critical to independent travel. By visiting many places, travelers accumulate status through their expanded claims to knowledge of the Other (Sorenson, 2003). This tradition is so entrenched that the transit between places sometimes comes to be as, if not more, important than the sites actually visited. Sutcliffe (1997) captures this irony in his satirical novel about backpacking through India:

> I had assumed that travelling was the crap bit you had to tolerate in order to get to the places you wanted to see, but it occurred to me that maybe the places were the shit bits that you had to tolerate in order to do the travelling. (p.98)

Movement is the impetus for numerous travel stories. Many travelers exchange narratives of the most difficult/dangerous/uncomfortable/futile journeys in their efforts to accumulate road status (Sorenson, 2003).

My time in India was dominated by shifting locations. In geographical terms, I was constantly mobile. The longest my travel partner and I spent in any single location was 10 days, and that only because we were both ill. There were several reasons for my decision to continually move, rather than remain in one or a few centres and conduct my research from there. Traveling continually was a means of building community with other travelers. In addition to enabling participation in the accumulation of places traveled, a shared experience of these places provided points of connection between travelers. Knowledge of other travel sites also allowed me to participate in conversations about which places were 'good' destinations and give tips for travel to and activities in those places. Although it facilitated my integration into the community of independent travelers, this temporary transience[9] had significant impacts on the research process.

Transience, as a concept, not only framed the experiences of individuals as they moved through spaces in India, but also pointed to the volatility of those spaces. Tourist spaces are themselves transient as they wax and ultimately wane in desirability (Palmer, 1998), a quality constructed through travelers' narratives alongside texts such as the *Lonely Planet*: "Anjuna retains its popularity with the party crowd, but its days as the place to 'see and be seen' are virtually over" (Singh *et al.*, 2003:804). Thus, the field shifts both geographically and temporally.

The study of a transient population by a transient researcher amplifies the constitution of 'the field' through the geographical and temporal presence of the researcher. Given the conspicuousness of transience in my research, it became evident

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[9] I use the phrase "temporary transience" to distinguish the inherently impermanent and voluntary nature of our movement through travel, in contrast to more structurally entrenched – and thus permanent and less voluntary – forms of transience, such as migrant labour and homelessness. I am indebted to Gordon Laxer for this observation.

that the relationships that any one person had to a highly spatially and temporally contingent 'field' were themselves highly contingent. Recruitment of travelers to participate reflects my active construction not only of the category of 'independent traveler' (defined by long-term, low-budget, socially-conscious travel), but of 'the field' from which they could be drawn. This field was specifically limited to my immediate whereabouts at any given time. Thus, rather than me moving through the field (an already constituted geography) of independent travelers (an already constituted category), independent travelers moved as participants through the field that I constructed.

This centering of myself, as researcher, highlights the ways in which the Other (i.e. research participant) can only be constituted through the Self (i.e. the researcher). For example, Indians working in the tourism industry had a tenuous relationship to my research. These people were only "Indians working in the tourism industry" insomuch as it was in the moments that they were working in the tourism industry that I encountered them. These Indians occupied a range of other subject positions, including son to a dying father (our initial driver through Rajasthan), husband to a guestworker in Europe (restaurant manager in Palolem), and domestic and potentially international tourist (waiter in Varkala). Thus, the Otherness of these Indians as workers in an industry predicated on Otherness (i.e. culturally-based tourism), is due to my encounters with these individuals in their place of work during the times in which they were working. Though the contingency of Self-Other field relations may be exacerbated by research that is characterized by short-term temporary transience, the implications of such research speak back to methodological considerations for ethnography in general.

Mutual Recognition

In my fieldwork, transience facilitated both my access to a porous network and the recruitment of individuals into the study because travelers (including myself) were eager to approach and engage with one another. Because, as travelers, we were moving quickly between locations and often arrived in places of which the only knowledge we had was the sketch in our guidebooks, trust in other travelers was quickly established regardless of whether or not the other travelers were actually able to provide useful information. Once I had made an initial contact with another person – something as inconsequential as asking for directions or their opinion of the food at a restaurant – a rapport often developed. Given the small populations of travelers and the relatively small geography of the tourist district, repeat encounters with that person were likely, each of which furthered the connection between the traveler (read: a potential participant) and myself.

This mutual recognition was important to beginning a relationship. In addition to the spaces that helped to designate travelers, we recognized each other through physical appearances (Sorenson, 2003). Aside from the oversized backpack strapped to someone's back as they searched out accommodation or waited at the bus station, dress was the most significant marker of differentiation between travelers and locals.[10] In contrast to the dress pants and button-up shirts worn by most Indian men and the salwar kameez and saris worn by many Indian women, travelers' attire was far more casual and often included pieces of clothing or accent pieces made of cheesecloth, my term for the loosely woven cotton fabrics common amongst travelers. In constructing myself as a

[10] I encountered few expatriates in the course of my research. Those expats I did encounter were people with whom I had an external connection, without which I never would have met them. This separation was due in great part to the geographies of independent travel which have a minimal temporal and spatial overlap with those who live and work long-term in India. Those expats I did meet dressed more formally, often wearing Indian dress (or part of it, such as the woman who wore the top of the salwar kameez with her pants from home).

traveler, I tried to carefully negotiate a tidy, professional, culturally-appropriate (i.e. no tank tops or tight clothing) appearance with the casual character of independent travel, a decision that marked me as a conservative traveler. This mark was evidenced in one participant's comments during an interview. While I was wearing a long-sleeved shirt and Sara was wearing a tank top, she remarked: "I don't want to wear long sleeves [...], just I can't stand the heat so so I don't mind ok stare at me just I'm not gonna put long sleeved shirt on."

Dress trumped racialization as a means to identify other travelers, although racialization and age (i.e. early 20s to 30s) were certainly implicit markers of travelers. While shopping in a district in Bangalore not mentioned in the *Lonely Planet*, I assumed, correctly, that Nigel – who identified as Indo-Australian – was a traveler rather than a local based on his t-shirt and long shorts. Such assumptions, however, were not always accurate. While trying to get a taxi from the extremely busy Bangalore railway station to the downtown centre, we arranged to share a cab with two women dressed in jeans. One of the women was carrying a small backpack and I was very excited about the prospect of interviewing another diasporic traveler: her combination of jeans and backpack seemed to suggest the dress of a traveler. However, once we began speaking in the cab, I learned that the woman with the backpack was Indian, but was leaving to attend graduate school at McGill in Montreal within the week. Thus, these markers were sometimes, not surprisingly, misleading.

Road Status: Subculture Surveillance

One factor that does limit fully open membership in the network of travelers is that of "road status" (Sorenson, 2003). This status, argues Sorenson, is the means through

which backpacking is reproduced as a relatively coherent institution in place of a fixed membership or space. Road status "comprises hardship, experience, competence, cheap travel, along with the ability to communicate it properly" (Sorenson, 2003:856) and is a hierarchy through which adherence to appropriate forms of travel are policed. It is evidence that for backpackers and independent travelers, time spent abroad is not a holiday like it is assumed to be for tourists (see Chapter 3). Those travelers who are seen to behave in ways which do not adhere to the idealized standards of backpacking, which include traveler savvy and a willingness to endure hardship (see Chapter 3), are at risk of having their 'traveler' status revoked and being relegated to the category of 'tourist'.

Although assessments of road status (Sorenson, 2003) played out in virtually all my encounters with travelers, the establishment of a hierarchy of travel practices was far more intense and rigid when I approached people with whom I had had no prior interactions. Virtually all of the travelers with whom I spoke casually prior to entering into a research relationship were relatively uncritical of multiple modes of independent travel. However, when conditions required a quick judgment of another traveler, road status was wielded with little forgiveness. This hierarchy of travel practices had the ability to facilitate or shutdown the possibilities for interviews as I was sometimes able to pass other travelers' standards of travel and sometimes not. In one instance, I met and chatted with a few travelers while waiting for a train. While trying to find a place in the conversation to insert an interview request, the other travelers asked what class of train I was using. When I replied "third a/c [air conditioned]," the response of one traveler was poorly disguised distaste for my decision to use a middle-class form of travel, rather than the least expensive (and highest road status) option. This traveler may have read my decision as either my inability to negotiate a travel agent who could only find seats in second a/c or my

refusal to do away with Western comforts and security. Both of these factors did influence my choice. However, the traveler's assessment of my low road status, as read through my low savvy and high comfort requirements, terminated the conversation and any potential to propose what would certainly have been an interesting interview.

Traveler Networks: In and Out

As transient communities, independent travelers have a relatively non-hierarchical structure that opens them to researchers, enabling informal (and often unmediated) attempts to engage with potential participants. Simply being a traveler enables movement through the relatively weak exclusionary boundaries that define 'travelers' and provides access to other backpackers as potential research participants (Sorenson (2003), Spreitzhofer (2002), and Suvantola (2002)), an observation paralleled by my experience. Participation in independent travel, and thus membership in the network of independent travelers, is open to anyone with appropriate dress, behaviour or associates (Sorenson, 2003).

Given the decentred character of travel and lack of formal organizations or representatives through which to contact travelers, a shared 'foreigner' identity is often sufficient to access social networks. As noted above, this identity is read through physical appearance (Sorenson, 2003). Identity as an independent traveler is also understood through participation in appropriate social and recreational activities, such as visiting 'appropriate' tourist sites and meeting other travelers for dinner and drinks along with a presence and temporary transience in the same geographical spaces as other travelers.

Having established myself as part of the community of independent travelers, by both sharing their spaces and adhering to certain norms of road status, I found it relatively

easy to meet travelers and invite them into the study. In day to day public sites such as guesthouse courtyards, restaurants, buses, trains and shared taxis as well as sites of tourist activities it was ordinary to begin conversations with unknown travelers. Because backpackers have no shared culture beyond their travel, their conversations with one another generally draw on travel experiences (Sorenson, 2003). Thus, many conversations begin with the question "why did you come to India?" Once a conversation began and this question was asked of me, it was a useful launching point to tell the person about my research and propose an interview. In this way, the lack of shared culture of the backpackers beyond their travel experiences not only enabled introductory conversation, but provided an easy means through which I could disclose myself as a researcher and make a formal request for an interview.

My entrance into networks of travelers was also facilitated, both directly and indirectly, by my interactions with people who provided tourist services to me and other travelers. My trip to Rajasthan took place by way of a hired taxi. While I was originally concerned that travelling by taxi would reduce my chances of engaging tourists, my driver was very supportive of my project – due, in no small part, to the tip that drivers receive at the end of the trip for their services – and became actively involved in recruiting participants for my project. He was directly responsible for bringing two travelers into the study, travelers who I would not otherwise have met.

In addition to my driver's direct efforts to recruit participants, travelling by taxi was a relatively common way of moving through Rajasthan and thus provided a point of shared experience with other travelers. Allegedly, according to the travel agent who sold me, and many other travelers, a taxi package, train service in Rajasthan is poor. The infrastructure for the taxi system was solid: many drivers went to the same hotels, recommended the

same tourist sites, and were themselves tightly networked. This network of travel operated in noticeable distinction from the routes, sites and services recommended by the *Lonely Planet* and other travel guides. Likely because of this divergence, travelling by way of taxi provided an immediate shared experience and a sense of connectedness that exceeded recognition between independent travelers more generally. As a result, I met three other participants by sharing hotels, tours, or even taxis with them.

Not only was it easy to intervene in the network of independent travelers, but it was also easy to withdraw. For independent travelers with highly unpredictable movements and an inevitable return to their home countries, either the participant or I was able to terminate the relationship on short (or no) notice and with no sense of loss or resentment. While I contacted all participants following their interview to thank them, and have maintained email contact with some of them beyond that follow-up, the geographical distance between the participants and me provided an easy means for either of us to relinquish the research relationship. This distance, along with the dissociation of email communication has enabled participants who are no longer interested in participating in the study to withdraw simply by not responding to emails inviting them to further participate in the project.

Logistics of Data Collection

Within unstable fields, researchers must negotiate their own mobilities between and within their ethnographic spaces. These negotiations have significant impacts upon the methodological practices of such research. The methodological decisions and practices of a researcher necessarily reflect their theoretical orientation towards their ethnographic subjects and spaces, as well as the material implications of their transient

selves. The implications of transnational mobilities for methodological decisions and research practices are considerable. As travelers work to negotiate unstable spaces, so too must researchers.

Although there is increasing theorizing on the instability of 'the field' and a researcher's relationship to it, there is a relatively small amount of literature that specifically addresses the impacts of temporary transience on methodological considerations such as participant recruitment, the participant-research relationship, and the logistics of data collection. In her reflections on the difficulties she encountered in her multi-sited ethnographic research with the wives of Japanese corporate employees who were living as expatriates in the United States, Kurotani (2004) makes a significant contribution to these issues. These expatriate women were only temporarily in the U.S., a status that made them disinclined to build new relationships and establish social networks. Moreover, they did not occupy a definable geographical field as their social networks were not spatially organized: they lived in a variety of locales, did not centre their activities in any cluster of locations and generally did not invite each other into their homes.

While these ethnographic subjects were temporarily transient, they did occupy transnational spaces in a more stable way, over a longer term period than hypermobile subjects, such as homeless persons, migrants and travelers, subjects for whom "social networks and frames of reference are likely to be dispersed and multilocal rather than conveniently fixed in one place" (Amit, 2000:13). While it was relatively easy to meet people and invite them to participate in research, arranging interviews and/or subsequent meetings with participants became a significant logistical difficulty and a major limitation to data collection. Interviews could not be planned because of the volatility of people's

schedules and because of the logistical impediments due to both parties being unfamiliar with the local setting.

With independent travelers, serendipitous timing was critical to arranging and conducting interviews within unpredictable travel schedules. At least four interviews were lost when travel plans (including my own) changed on short notice. An older couple who I had made arrangements to interview simply didn't show up. Since they had seemed very interested in the opportunity to talk about how their experience was much different than many other independent travelers given their age, it is possible that their no-show was due to participation in recreational activities that were more interesting and conflicted with the appointment or simply not being able to find the meeting place. In other instances, potential participants changed their minds about participating in activities at the last minute or indulged in too many intoxicants to conduct the interview to which they had agreed. These instances were exacerbated by my own transience: the decision to move repeatedly, and often on short notice, was in keeping with the mobility practices of independent travelers, yet it often subverted research practices by moving away from possible interviews.

Contact with participants was also difficult in a logistical way. Few travelers had cell phones and public phones were erratic in availability and their function. As such, phones were of little use to the project. Email was similarly frustrating as internet cafes were sometimes difficult to find, occasionally very expensive, and frequently marred by poor or no connections. Even if phones or email had been useful, designating a place to meet in an area that is poorly known to both people was a complicated proposition. Even some 'obvious' meeting places did not lend themselves to the participant and me getting together. For example, after making arrangements to meet a participant at the Elite Hotel,

where he was staying in Bangalore, the front desk of the hotel reported that not only did they not have a person by the participant's name, but no such room number. I subsequently learned that there are three hotels by the same name in the city.

The difficulties of meeting up with potential participants intensified the need to be able to interview on the spot, should an opportunity present itself, an orientation that resulted in multiple interviews in a single day if willing participants were present. Unlike ethnographic practices that emphasize a long-term engagement with a few people, the temporary transience of independent travelers meant that "instead of prolonged interaction with the few, fieldwork has had to be structured around impromptu interactions with the many" (Sorenson, 2003:850). Preparedness to conduct an interview on the spot was essential. I travelled with consent forms, a recorder, microphones and spare batteries, as well as interview schedules at all times, a useful strategy when independent travel practices do not involve making or adhering to appointments. These interviews were often conducted on the spot and took place in a variety of locales including rickshaws, trains, beaches, and restaurants, similar to Sprietzhofer's (2002) experience:

> The interviews took place both in the urban backpacker centres... as well as along the guidebook-defined trails across the region: at traveler restaurants and on locals markets, at airports and bus stations, climbing Sumatra's volcanoes and relaxing in the shade of Buddhist wats, sweating on Indonesia's crowded pelni ferries as well as freezing in Malaysia's air-conditioned coaches, even on Cambodia's 'Killing Fields' – in short, wherever western-style backpacking was evident. (p.119)

Leisure ←→ Research

At a more abstract level, travel is socially organized as a contrast to people's working lives in their home countries. Travel implies to most people a renunciation of their everyday responsibilities and obligations, complemented with bouts of self-indulgence and pleasure (particularly in a country where pleasure is relatively cheaply had). In his outline

of the "minimal characteristics of the social practices" of tourism, Urry (1990) points to a bifurcation of work and leisure, one with many parallels to the bifurcation of home and fieldwork:

> Tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organized work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organised as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in 'modern' societies. ... The journey and stay are to, and in, sites outside the normal places of residence and work. Periods of residence elsewhere are of a short-term and temporary nature. There is a clear intention of return 'home' within a relatively short period of time.... The places gazed upon are for purposes not directly connected with paid work and they normally offer some distinctive contrast with work (both paid and unpaid). (p.2-3)

Although this dichotomy between work and tourism is overly simplistic, given the parallel tasks in which travelers are regularly involved such as negotiating the bureaucracy of crossing borders, exchanging money and checking into hotels alongside day-to-day manual work like doing laundry by hand, it was a theme invoked by virtually every traveler with whom I spoke during my research. Travelers talked about a break from the responsibilities of work and being "free" more generally. These comments mirror Kontogeorgopoulos' (2003) findings on backpacking in Thailand. He found that travelers characterized their travel by non-participation in productive (in the capitalist sense) work in contrast to their routine, quotidian lives at home.

Researchers who are studying travel challenge this bifurcation. In tourism sites, these researchers are actively engaged in productive activities related to their work. Moreover, they bring formality into spaces of leisure through, for example, the adherence to formal bureaucratic procedures associated with ethics policies. For example, many people did not care about the formal process of informed consent and were impatient with my explanation of the project, the storage of data, and the ways I might be using their

contributions. I rarely gave people a copy of their informed consent, as they did not want to pack it around.

Such compromises to tourism's separation from work are not always well received by people who are actively seeking distance from their work. As one example, Harrison (2003) was interested in doing research on the pleasure people derive from their travel. She went to Hawaii and found that the only people interested in speaking to her tended to be men who were waiting for their wives who were shopping. She quickly realized that people were not interested in participating in her research, a refusal that can be read as their refusal to bring work, or work-like obligations, into their leisure time. Ultimately Harrison recruited people who had already returned home from their travels and asked them to reflect upon their travel experiences.

Fortunately independent travel, unlike travel to Hawaii, is a relatively long-term practice in which travelers have an abundance of time and flexible schedules, despite their ongoing mobility. Traveling to India to conduct my research not only enabled me to observe travelers traveling, but also made it possible to have access to a large group of people that were sharing similar experiences and had significant amounts of time to speak about their reflections on their travel. Such a group of participants would have been much more difficult to locate within their, or my, home countries. In addition, my conversations and interviews with travelers in India often raised complicated and troubling issues associated with travel that had not yet been gentrified with the patina of distance.

Given the relatively open schedules of travelers, I did not have to negotiate the issue of taking up people's precious time. Rather, I spent many hours sitting on the beach, in restaurants and in hotel room courtyards making preliminary contact with potential participants. I participated in tourist activities like camel treks, boat tours and cooking

classes as other means to meet people. These settings emphasized the very leisure upon which independent travel is predicated although they did not feel very leisurely to me. This contradiction emerged from the need to appear to be a leisurely traveler while as a researcher, I was often overwhelmed by the research I was undertaking. As a result of the contrast between my participation in activities and my ultimate purpose to draw connections between the individuals and the global structural inequalities that contextualize their travel, I had to negotiate the ways in which my research was understood as 'work.'

During her ethnographic research with Japanese expatriate wives who did not work, Kurotani (2004) occupied a strange purgatory between work and leisure. She found it difficult to explain to the women that to spend leisure time with them was to do work. The expatriate women eventually designated her as an *asobinin* – meaning literally "a person who plays, or a loafer without recognizable and honest means of making a living" (2005:213). Kurotani was understood by her informants as a person whose livelihood turned on play, not research or work. This reluctance to have her project accepted as justifiable research was a perspective I also encountered through the tension between work and play. The reluctance of travelers to take my research seriously turned to a significant extent on my transience and was exacerbated by my gender and age. Together, my social location along with my research topic posed some obstacles to my research process, obstacles that have broader implications for questions regarding what constitutes legitimate knowledge production.

The Limitations of Transience

Although transience facilitated my research because of the porosity of the social networks and spaces I was able to enter, there were ways in which transience also limited the potential of my project. In addition to creating scepticism amongst participants and non-participants about my research abilities and contributions, transience also limited the scope of the project I was able to undertake. Moreover, my transience – complicated by my gender and age – had repercussions for the ways in which both my travel and research practices were read by participants as well as other travelers I encountered.

Cracking the Tourism Industry

One aspect of my proposed research program was virtually inaccessible, due in no small part to my own transience, alongside that of the tourist destinations and individual businesses. Initially, I had hoped to interview Indians working in the local tourist economy for their perspective on independent travel as an alternative to mass tourism, as well as the structural relationships between themselves and the travelers to whom they provided services. However, this portion of the project was not successful. In the context of the tourist economy, being both a traveler and a researcher had distinct disadvantages. The problematic of my identity and practices as both a traveler and a researcher was directly tied to the volatility of the tourism industry (Palmer, 1998).

One particular incident highlighted the tensions of tourism and research. While travelling in Rajasthan, my companion and I took a tour of a city arranged by our driver and the hotel. During the tour, the guide, a young man who was about 16 or 17 years old, attempted to kiss both my travel partner and myself. Rather annoyed by his presumption, at the end of the tour, in front of our driver, I told the guide he should never try to kiss his clients. Completely oblivious to the uproar I had just set in motion, I returned to my room.

Minutes later, there was a knock at the door and I was requested to go up to the rooftop, where at least five men were yelling at the guide (including our driver and the hotel manager). As the yelling progressed, the men began to beat him. Extremely uncomfortable with this situation, I explained that I understood that the guide had made a mistake and that I was sure it would never happen again. The other men refused my comments and continued to punish the guide. I left. Later on in the evening, someone came by my room to let me know that the guide's father had been notified and he would beat his son. The next morning, I had arranged to do an interview with the hotel manager, who was now extremely uncomfortable in my presence, but clearly felt obligated to indulge me. We did the interview, which was approximately seven minutes, during which time the manager extolled every aspect of tourism in India. Immediately after the interview, as we loaded our bags into the car, the manager told me several times not to tell anyone what had happened the night before, referring to the guide's attempted kissing.

The strong reactions of the tourism workers to the guide's action are indicative of the transience of tourism itself, insomuch as one bad incident can direct travelers away from a particular hotel or city and thus suggest that the transience of travelers can itself shape the practices of tourism. The potential impact of word-of-mouth was clearly sufficient to upset both the hotel manager and the driver. In this context, including the perceptions of Indians working in the tourism industry in my critical interrogation of independent travel as an alternative form of tourism was extremely difficult and not a component of the project to which I was able to do justice.

My 'exclusion' from the realm of the formal tourism industry resulted from the matrix of privileges I occupied as a researcher of tourism. This social location was dependent, in part, upon my national privilege, which directly facilitated my travel to India

through easy access to both a passport and a visa to India, as well as to a currency much stronger than the rupee. My privilege also drew from my middle-class status, which made it possible not only to travel for an extended period (see Chapter 3), but also to pursue my doctorate, for which I undertook this research.

As a young white woman, I was identifiable as a traveler by other travelers (see "Mutual Recognition," above). While my whiteness granted me the privilege of being read as a traveler, and appeased as such, my gender was a more complicated subject position. As a woman, I was assumed to be vulnerable at the same time that I participated in an activity predicated on gender equality (see Chapter 5). Clearly, in the incident with the guide who tried to kiss me, the need to protect vulnerable women (particularly those who are white and hail from Western countries – see Chapter 6) collided with my status as a privileged traveler and as a researcher.

My researcher status was often conflated with that of the *Lonely Planet* writers: not only was I an individual traveler with access to other individual travelers, but I was often assumed to have access to the collectivity of independent travelers through a connection to guidebooks' institutionalized suggestions and rejections of specific businesses. Indians working in the tourism industry are not unaware of the 'grassroots' orientation of the *Lonely Planet*. In one instance, I attempted to interview the woman owner of a massage service referenced in the *Lonely Planet*. She spoke at length about the difficulties she encountered as a woman entrepreneur and relentlessly requested that I write to the *Lonely Planet* to recommend her new clothing store; she believed that it was only through recognition in the guidebook that her business would be secure enough to withstand the harassment of the men running nearby businesses. Even without any formal status as a guidebook writer,

this woman was savvy enough to understand the 'public' approach of the *Lonely Planet* as a means to promote her business.

CENTERING THE RESEARCHER

In identifying the field as an actively constructed social category, Amit (2000) suggests that the ethnographer comes to stand as a central figure in the active production of an ethnographic research site. Not only does the researcher define the field, actively producing a coherent site by wading through the necessarily globalized entanglement with other sites and spaces (Marcus, 1995), but like the field, the researcher is herself embedded in complicated relations, relations that exceed her produced relationship to the constituted field.

As a Western independent traveler, my own social location had significant impacts on the way I was able to conduct the project as well as on the ways in which the project was read by others. My status as a Western woman traveler had implications not only for my research with Indians working in the tourism industry, but also with other Western travelers. The purpose of my project is to explore the ways in which Western independent travelers negotiate their social location in a so-called Third World context that brings the privileges associated with their social location into sharp relief. Yet this underlying premise was often compromised by my social location as a woman, as well as by the leisure status attached to independent travelers.

Gender and Masculinized Travel

Unlike research that tends to study 'up' or 'down' (Luff, 1999; Fine, 1998, respectively) my research took place within a network from which I was not obviously socially distanced. However, my gender was imposed as a significant component of my

identity. Although I had not intended to make gender a focus of my research, as young white women, my sister and I experienced not only frequent staring by Indian men but we were also groped in busy settings in separate instances. These experiences occurred alongside our informal conversations with other travelers (both men and women) and our relationships with male travelers.

Alongside the attention from Indian men that we were given as women travelers, we also received much attention from Western travelers, both men and women. We were frequently given advice for our personal safety by men travelers, including the common opinions that it was unsafe for a woman to travel alone and that women were better off traveling with men. As a woman travelling with another woman – and no man – my travels were understood as risky in the context of masculinized travel, a theme further elaborated in Chapter 5. As an unaccompanied – in the heteronormative sense – woman in India, I was assumed to be vulnerable. When interviewing travelers about the differences they thought might exist for men and women travelling in India, several travelers (either men or women travelling with men) responded that it was unsafe for women travelling without men. These comments were typically quickly followed by the comment that it was generally okay for two women to travel together, a caveat that seemed to be for my benefit, so I would not be offended as a woman traveling with only another woman.

Not only was it assumed that it was unsafe for women to travel alone, but a couple of participants expressed surprise at my competence as a traveler. Speaking rather bluntly, one man told me that my travel partner and I were "sweet and innocent Canadians" and that he was very impressed that we were able to carry out typical travel-related tasks like bartering for hotel rooms and navigating transportation on our own, he stated, unlike other women travelers who he had met.

Gender and Research

This underestimation of my abilities carried across into readings of my project. As a researcher, I was read by other travelers as young and naïve, a reading I admittedly did not challenge. In some ways, this perception worked to my advantage as I was able to present myself as less intimidating alongside a research topic that was potentially very threatening. The informality of the interview and my self-presentation – someone seeking the expertise of travelers while revealing little of my own – reduced the threat of many difficult questions and made it possible for participants to have sufficient trust as to speak outside of filters of political correctness.

At the same time that it facilitated interviews and questioning, however, the foregrounding of my gender by participants – which contributed significantly to my presumed naïvety – also challenged my role as a scholarly researcher. Given their assumptions, some participants understood open questions as evidence that I did not really know what I was doing:

> Kristin: Do you think there is a relationship between wealth in [your country] and the West and poverty in India?
> Daniel: No, no, the, no. Just no. Your professor will explain it why [Kristin sounds confused in background], you professor will explain why there isn't no relationship, between wealth and no wealth.

Thus, while this perception of me as a something of a fool was in some ways helpful insomuch as it contributed to recruitment and made it easy to get people to speak their opinions on sensitive issues, it also undermined my project.

Ethnography in Great Places

At an individual level, most participants did not take me seriously as a scholar, an identity which would have compromised my claim to the identity of traveler because of the contradiction between the casualness of travel and the formal, elitist overtones of

academia. On a broader scale, my choice of India as a location – a location that lent itself to both the independent travelers and the colonial legacies in which I was interested – shaped people's perceptions of my research project. It was often assumed that my research project was secondary to my own desire to spend a few months in India. Many people understood my project as the perfect scam: the university provided funding so I could go to India to travel and hang out with travelers.

This understanding of my project as a 'scam' in which I had fooled the university into approving and funding a project based entirely on personal leisure ironically encouraged participation. Participants were happy to give interviews for such informal and obviously frivolous (to many of them) research. This misperception enabled me to downplay my professional status and maintain the informal environment of independent travel while introducing and conducting my research. Yet, it also exacerbated my gendered social location and rendered me incapable of carrying out the project in the eyes of several participants. Further, participants' suggestions that I had come up with the "perfect scam" by obtaining funding to do research in India also challenged the very foundations of my project, as it reproduced the notion of travel as unquestionably desirable and necessarily unproblematic. Any efforts to provide greater context to my research or to rationalize the project were read as defensive and reinforced the original perceptions of many of the travelers.

By beginning the interviews from the participant's premise that the project was somewhat fraudulent, I reproduced the ideal of travel on a low, or – even better – someone else's, budget. This starting point contradicted the overall rationale for the study and made the exploration of the complicated inegalitarian aspects of travel more difficult to fold into the interview. In my interactions with other travelers, I was not able to rationalize the

research as a project grounded in a broader critique of global political economy, mobilities, and legacies of neo-colonialism – intellectual contexts which would have made the project much more serious and thus much less fun. In the end, this lack of context frequently (though not always) undermined the politics of the research project in which I sought not only to interrogate the ways in which travelers made connections between their individual travel and the systems of global inequality that facilitated that travel, but also to draw participants' attention to the ways in which they were directly implicated in these systems.

Power in Research

The intent of my research is to complicate and problematize seemingly benign travel insomuch as this travel is embedded in global practices of economic inequality, racism and patterns of exploitation. Assumptions about the competence of women travelers (certainly complicated by the fact that I played into these assumptions in order to facilitate my research) as well as assumptions about my competence as a researcher meant that there was very limited space for me to identify as an uneasy traveler and someone critical of travel practices more generally, which would have been a more honest representation of the project.

The need to downplay the intellectual bases of my research – critical political economy and post-colonial theory – compromised the politics underlying my research, in which I had hoped that the interview process would introduce participants to a critical perspective on travel in general, and instigate critical reflection on their own travel practices. In the field, I was afraid of being read as hostile and thus limiting travelers' participation in the research. Several participants came to the research critical of many discourses and practices of travel; these participants were already politicized in a way that

aligned with the critical politics that informed my project. For those who were not, I did not feel comfortable pushing reflection upon their implication in broader systems of social inequality. This reflection is perhaps better undertaken in moments outside of the travel practices in which independent travelers are deeply invested.

In some senses, I ceded a certain amount of power to the participants in my study. Yet, as the researcher, I still retain a significant amount of authority (Wolf, 1996). I have decided which quotes will be included and which will not. I have used individual's quotations to provide support for the themes that emerged through my interviews and observations, themes that I am sure would upset some, if not most, participants. I have not submitted drafts of my writing to participants to ensure that they are comfortable with the ways in which I have interpreted their actions or comments. Although I feel obligated to ensure that I conducted my research in a manner consistent with research ethics protocols, I do not feel obligated to write an analysis that the participants will find comfortable. Such an approach, I believe, would undermine the critical lens of the project and would reiterate an individualist rather than discursive framework. I remain in contact with several of the participants, but have yet to share my dissertation findings with them.

The power I wielded during my research did not only affect the participants in my study, but also the Indians with whom I interacted. As a client from whom he expected a tip, my driver through Rajasthan, as I noted above, went to great lengths to recruit participants for my project. In this tacit mutual arrangement, I recognized his efforts by providing him with a generous tip at the end of our trip. This arrangement, however, in which my reciprocation was voluntary, reflects the underlying inequality of interactions based on the sale of waged labour for the provision of service.

In other instances, the power I held as a Western traveler and a researcher in my relationships with local Indians was again complicated by my gender and age. For instance, after the attempted kiss by the young guide, I was to be both protected by the yelling men and appeased by the manager, in case I should use my status as a white, Western traveler to launch a particularly strong complaint against a company. Clearly, the hotel manager was not interested in discussing tourism with me except as a means of conciliation.

Finally, some Indians made presumptions about my power that were outside of my comfort as well as my capabilities. The woman who wanted me to tout her business to the *Lonely Planet* provides one such example. Although I could have written to the *Lonely Planet* to recommend her shop, something I was uncomfortable with, there is no guarantee that my recommendation would have been included in an updated edition of the book.

Had the portion of my research that addressed Indian perspectives of tourism been more successful, the power relations that permeated these interactions would certainly have been more complicated. In particular, my relationship to, and feelings of obligation towards, the Indians working in the tourism industry would have been different as compared with my sense of responsibility towards the independent travelers with whom I spoke. These reflections on power parallel the overall focus of my dissertation: like travelers who are embedded in relations and patterns of inequality that exceed their personal choices, so too are researchers.

Concluding Remarks

As a researcher, though I was central to the construction of the multiple fields in which I conducted ethnographic fieldwork, I was also bound to particular subject positions,

woman and traveler, that exceeded my 'fields.' This interpellation points to the interconnectedness of fields and researchers, ideals that necessarily supersede the boundaries of space and community and of subject location, respectively, which they are assumed to possess. My occupation of multiple subject positions that belonged to ostensibly distinct spaces not only highlights the implosion of these spaces, but also speaks to the global identities of the other independent travelers, as well as the Indian locals we encountered.

As a set of practices that amplify globalized mobilities, travel highlights the failed assumptions of stable fields and coherent communities. The bounded fields and communities implicit within traditional anthropological ethnography strongly resemble those imagined by travelers. The imaginings of distinct, pristine cultural Others and authentic spaces and the failures of these ideals are integral to independent travel and together they form the substantive basis of the next chapters.

III. Independent Travel: Colonialism, Liberalism, and the Self[11]

Even if they share a desire to engage in meaningful, egalitarian practices, independent travelers act within a context marked by particular historical, political, economic, and social relations. After I develop independent travel as a category that embodies ideals and contradictions of non-touristic travel, I analyze the ideals of intimacy and non-commodification that give meaning to independent travel, as well as the implications of travelers' practices of hardship for Self-making, in the broader global frame of neo-colonialism.

In this chapter, I complicate the construction of innocence that underscores independent travel. By drawing connections between independent travelers' adherence to the liberal tenets of freedom, equality, and individuality, which enable dissociation from the context of their travel and thus enable practices of innocence, as well as to the (neo)colonial structural context of independent travel, I argue that the production of Self through independent travel is a highly contradictory pattern. Liberalism and capitalism are tangled with the constructions of exotic, cultural Others that provide meaning to travel to the Third World. Yet the liberal underpinnings of independent travel – in particular the atomistic individualism that frames independent travel – decontextualize travelers from the cultural, political, and economic systems within which this travel takes place. It is through this dissociation – the social construction of innocence – that independent travelers can negotiate the contradictions of their travel. This rethinking of independent travel suggests that rather than pose an alternative to mainstream tourism and neo-colonial practices more generally, independent travel itself is deeply implicated in (re)producing colonial relations.

[11] A version of this chapter has been submitted for publication.

A Neo-Colonial Milieu

Promoted as the world's largest industry (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2004), tourism has been advocated as an important economic opportunity (World Tourism Organization, 2002) and a key to restructuring the national economies of the Third World (International Monetary Fund, 2004). The World Bank shares a similar perspective:

> There is little doubt about the development benefits to countries that host tourism projects. But without private capital for the construction of accommodations and provision of services, the potential of tourism assets cannot be realized. And for investors to go into these countries, the business environment has to offer the opportunity to operate profitable firms. (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, World Bank Group, n.d.)

As is clear in this excerpt, and in IMF's mandate "to support policies aimed at correcting the underlying problems" of poor countries' economies (IMF, n.d.), both of these organizations actively participate in the creation of neo-liberal economies. The economic reforms advocated by these agencies facilitate international investment through demands for the privatization of publicly held resources and services (Klein, 2007). This neo-liberal model is based upon transnational monetary flows, flows that typically move from wealthy investors, who are concentrated in so-called developed countries, through Third World countries and back to wealthy shareholders, who again are concentrated in developed countries (Robbins, 2005; on tourism, see Nowicka, 2007), although they are also present amongst the elite of the countries that are traveled.

Critics have identified tourism as a new form of colonialism (Duffy, 2002; Hutnyk, 1996). Although the West no longer wields direct political rule, these critics implicate tourism in neo-colonial relations in which formal political domination has been replaced by less overt control over social and economic resources (Shohat, 1997). The consequences of such control include ecological destruction, the creation of unskilled and menial jobs,

and the commodification of cultures (Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Duffy, 2002). In addition to the rejection of neo-liberalism that informs critiques of the IMF and World Bank, the notion of 'development' that underpins the economic practices and policies of these organizations has also been tied to colonialism. Suggesting that development may be usefully conceived as expanding the freedoms of citizens of the Third World, Sen (1999) argues that these freedoms must not only consider industrialization and GNP as indicators of economic freedom, but also social and political freedoms, freedoms (such as the freedom to dissent) that are often tenuous when they challenge or interfere with 'development.' The limits imposed upon social and political freedoms in order to achieve the economic 'freedom' of the market (Klein, 2007) echo those from the era of formalized colonialism (see Sartre, 2001). Thus, the macrostructural context within which travel to Third World countries takes place is steeped within contemporary formulations that reassert colonial relations.

Travel and Colonialism

Contemporary forms of travel are haunted by their parallels to the formal practices of colonialism which preceded them (see Blunt, 1994; Pratt, 1992). In neo-colonial contexts, past practices of formalized colonialism have been transmogrified and persist in contemporary forms. For instance, global relations of "geo-economic hegemony" iterate the political control of early formalized colonial practices in a new form (Shohat, 1992:107). This economic influence, as overtly manifested through policies of supranational organizations such as the World Bank and IMF noted above, also operates at a more insidious level in which consumers of the so-called First World wield monetary influence through, for example, their chosen tourist destination (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003; Palmer,

1998). This influence is due, in considerable part, to the unequal currency exchange that operates between travelers and the Third World locales they select. Although travelers do not participate in colonialism on the same scale as neo-liberal capitalists, they remain entangled in macrolevel economic policies and often share the normative assumptions about cultural Others that underlie these policies (see Chapter 4). Middle-class travelers from (over)developed countries drive a tourism-based economy that depresses wages and working conditions for those working in the tourism industry (Nowicka, 2007; Noy, 2004) as travelers and tourists demand cheaper and cheaper services (Azarya, 2004) to enable the long-term project of Self-development.

The colonial legacies that contextualize independent travel are not only economic, but also political: global privilege is also vested in citizenship (Choules, 2006). Although citizenship is domestically legislated, it is operationalized at international borders (Choules, 2006:286) where the mobile bodies of those traveling from the First World to the Third World are provided easy passage in contrast to the rigorous bureaucracy imposed upon those traveling in the reverse direction (Clarke, 2006). These obstacles are manifested in the spatialization and surveillance of airports alongside the discretionary powers of visa officers and customs officials. National boundaries dialectically produce community members and outsiders through formalized manifestations of citizenship (Choules, 2006) as well as through national identity-building practices (Mackey, 1999). Travel is thus a process through which imagined national communities represented by a metonymic racialized and idealized Other are explored and found to be distinct and exotic. Simultaneously, independent travelers reinforce the supranationalist imaginings that are manifested in notions of "the West":

> The European, or Euro-American, nations fiercely competing for the world's colonial spoils recognized an identity and an "equality" in this very competition, which they baptized "white." Here again a racial signifier transcends national differences and organizes transnational solidarities. (Balibar, 1990:286-7)

The global alliances and fraternities that underpinned colonial conquering, settlement, and resource-extraction are echoed – albeit in muted forms – in contemporary independent travel. In a neo-colonial setting, travelers build informal alliances within the broader community of travelers, one that typically draws from Western countries. Given that travelers are more likely to develop relationships with other travelers, rather than the locals with whom they are ostensibly seeking out meaningful interactions (Hottola, 2005), independent travel is also serves to solidify conceptions of the universal Western subject.

In terms of individual mobilities, early exploration and discovery helped to establish both travel as leisure practices and regimes of formal colonialism (Pratt, 1992). As travel as a form of leisure developed alongside colonial relationships – particularly between what are now the so-called First and Third Worlds – these practices were woven together (Blunt, 1994). Even for those travelling from the Third to the First World, this mobility was infused with colonialism:

> Even though, for many Indian women and men, travel became a method through which education and certain forms of agency could be acquired, it was complicated both by imperial notions of travel within which Indians were seen as being liberated by European modernity constructed through notions of education and progress, and by the Indian travelers' desire to take advantage of these discourses but for various ends that reconstituted and sometimes, though not always, subverted European cultural superiority. (Grewal, 1996:137)

Early forms of travel, like travel today, were not only tangled with colonial discourses and practices, but were also negotiated through the liberal search for Self. As

with contemporary independent travelers, this search for Self was critical in European travel during the 19th century:

> Freedom, within the European Enlightenment, was seen as a natural right, one that in Romantic philosophy was essential for the unalienated Self. With the rise of Romanticism, Europeans had new reasons to venture into areas that no one hitherto had desired to visit. Romanticism, combined with the scientific imperative, enabled exploration and mapping the search for the noble savage, for the "Other" required by the Romantic Self to be complete. (Grewal, 1996:137)

This Self, as Grewal notes, is dialectical and can only be located through the cultural Other, a continuing theme in contemporary global practices. In colonial contexts, this Othering was overtly hierarchical and racialized. The neo-colonial encounters of travel parallel these practices of cultural Othering in periods of formal political colonialism, albeit in more subtle contemporary forms.

Contemporary rhetoric has shifted from 'race' to 'culture' to denote and reproduce differences between groups (Frankenberg, 1993). Yet racialization remains deeply tied to 'cultural' practices. Significantly, both 'race' and 'culture' are understood against a tacit, but unspoken framework of unmarked white privilege. The celebration of diversity, operationalized through both independent travel and 'cultural' events and experiences in the home countries of many Western travelers, is simultaneously the construction of difference. The "touring subject" (Hage, 2000) operates both within travelers' home countries (potentially mired in intracolonial practices) and also overseas, following the lineage of historical European practices of the bourgeois "Grand Tour."

When it is entrenched as a component of nation-building – as in the case of Canada and Australia – the promotion of multiculturalism and the celebration of Others' culture has been tied to preserving cultural Others of colour as objects while buttressing white, Anglo citizens as hegemonic subjects (Bannerji, 2000; Hage, 2000, respectively). In

Canada, the state's formal policy of multiculturalism enables Others to participate in their culture through tolerable forms such as dance and dress (Bannerji, 2000). This tolerance implies a position of power from which one can decide whether to tolerate or not (Hage, 2000). In Australia, this power to tolerate is held by whites, who enjoy not only the spectacle of cultural Otherness in the name of tolerance, but also reinscribe their status at the centre of the Australian state through their celebration of Other cultures:

> Far from putting 'migrant cultures', even in their 'soft' sense (i.e. through food, dance, etc.), on an equal footing with the dominant culture, the theme [of Carnivale] conjures the images of a multicultural fair where the various stalls of neatly positioned migrant cultures are exhibited and where the real Australians, bearers of the White nation and positioned in the central role of the touring subjects, walk around and enrich themselves. (Hage, 2000:118).

Thus, it is not only racialized cultural Otherness that is constructed at home and through travel to Third World destinations, but also the unmarked racial and cultural normativity of whiteness.

Independent travelers today, along with mass tourists, relocate themselves as viewing subjects in the countries of cultural Others. The celebration of diversity is particularly notable in the context of independent travel in which participants actively seek out cultural Others with whom to have meaningful encounters. These encounters sometimes operate through invasive practices that exoticize locals at the same time that they claim an egalitarianism that denies the asymmetries of the encounter. The fetishization of particular spaces, cultures, and individuals is obscured through the liberal tenets of equality and individualism. These tenets mediate the structural inequalities that contextualize a meal in the home of a local, for instance. Yet liberalism, invoked to establish innocence, has been implicated in the reproduction of racial dynamics and marginalization based on race (Goldberg, 1993) as well as formalized practices of

colonialism (Sartre, 2001; Biko, 1996) and thus is not useful as a means to escape persisting forms of global inequality.

In neo-colonial settings, the capitalist free market and the liberal tenets of choice, equality, and competition work together to manage persisting colonial relations. Global economic inequality is explained, if not justified, through appeals to supply and demand patterns of labour and resources (patterns that are themselves legacies of formal colonial rule), while the fetishization and objectification of cultural Others is read apolitically and acontextually through the innocent celebration of culture. These discourses smooth the ruptures that asymmetrical mobilities and culturally Othered people create for an imagined global community in which the gross inequalities of formal colonial practices are relegated to an atavist past.

Structural Privilege and Mobilities of Travel

The financial capacity to travel to the Third World is achieved, in no small part, through unequal relative currencies (Gogia, 2006). Independent travel, with its underlying reliance on long-term travel as a means to build and engage in cultural understanding, as well as its efforts to build cultural capital through less commodified approaches to travel (Munt, 1994) is directly supported by the unbalanced currency exchange between First and Third World countries. These relative currencies themselves are not random, but have been actively produced through historical colonial practices that exported raw materials to be resold to colonies at a profit to the colonial power (Sartre, 2001).

Yet even within any particular Western country, people's capacities to travel are unequal. Mobilities are determined not only by macro-level economic relations and citizenship privileges, but also by individuals' cultural and classed relationships. As one

traveler I interviewed pointed out, not everyone possesses the freedom to travel independently:

> It's not just like financial, kind of financial burdens, but other responsibilities and other things that um, that maybe people who aren't as, I don't know, privileged, like they have to think about other people and their families for providing for them so I guess it's that, it's not just that, it's not just financial burden, but also um, I guess having that kind of inde-, that real independence and freedom that a lot of you know, bourgeois people have that other people don't. (Susan)

In this instance, Susan spoke directly to the liberal, bourgeois relations that enable travel from Western countries. For some people, privileged material realities come together with particular social structures and value systems that emphasize individual self-development. These independent travelers can take extended leave from school, work, and/or family obligations after they have accumulated sufficient savings to support themselves during their travel (or are able to rely on support from their families while abroad).

Notably, two of the travelers I interviewed identified as being lower-class, in contrast to the rest of the self-identified middle-class participants. One of these travelers had spent several years planning her CV with a collection of appropriate academic and life experiences so that she would eligible for the fellowship through which she was able to travel to India, a destination to which she had always wanted to travel: "I came on this fellowship because it was part of my master plan to get to India, so I wanted to figure out a way" (Leah). The second traveler, Shannel, had won a plane ticket and chose to go to India as it was far and inexpensive. In order to pay for her expenses while in India, she had been forced to sell her digital camera. These travelers sacrificed considerably more (in terms of time and material goods, respectively) for their trip to India.

Individuals' mobilities depend upon the privileges they possess, and the experiences they accumulate through these mobilities reinforce privilege through claims to

cultural capital (Desforges, 2000; Munt, 1994). Given this self-perpetuating cycle, independent travel is not only tangled within global systems of inequality, but also within structures of inequality at a smaller scale. Within nations or communities those who have the means to travel – both material and ideological, in terms of a commitment to liberal Self-making both personally and within their social networks – and who choose to act on this advantage reiterate their middle-classness. Although this social and economical differentiation challenges liberal egalitarianism, the liberal project of individualism manifested as Self-development through travel trumps equality (Arblaster, 1984).

The Making of Independent Travelers

Disillusioned with the apathy towards cultural geography and the passive consumption of orchestrated tourist sites that they perceive in mainstream mass tourism, independent travelers attempt to resist many of the stereotypes of mainstream tourist experiences (Allon, 2004). By using local services and actively avoiding large-scale tourism operations run by Western companies, independent travelers claim a more socially responsible form of travel (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003). Some scholars have suggested that independent travel – as an alternative form of tourism – may guard against some of the issues associated with mass tourism. For instance, in Byron Bay, Australia, the promotion of backpacking-style tourism is understood as a means to mediate the expropriation of the site by distant resort-style developers (Westerhausen and Macbeth, 2003). Similarly, there is some indication that low-budget, independent-style travel brings more money to countries than does short-term tourism, and that this money is spread geographically, as well as through communities to those who have more limited participation in mass tourism, such as women and local suppliers (Scheyvens, 2002).

Along with this alternative economic model, adherents of independent travel attempt to make cultural travel benign through a commitment to self-reflexive and culturally interactive travel and, in so doing, endeavour to disentangle themselves from the colonial legacies that organize global mobilities. Yet, the ideals that are understood to set independent travel apart from mainstream tourism - such as self-development achieved through hardship - are ultimately part of liberal Self-making practices. The making of a liberal Self through travel is rooted in a celebration of diversity and a moral project of Self-realization. Travel practices are steeped in colonial legacies, beginning from the exploration that helped to establish formalized relationships of colonialism (McClintock, 1995; Pratt, 1992) and persisting in contemporary times as the mutual construction of Self and Other enabled by Orientalism (Said, 1979).

Independent travel as an alternative form remains embedded in the implicit hierarchies of colonialism that persist in a neo-colonial global setting. Not only does independent travel, as one splinter of the persisting legacies of colonialism, reproduce structural inequalities through travelers' capitalization on unequal capital flows and asymmetrical mobilities, but it also reproduces (if not improves) the social location of travelers as individual actors (Desforges, 1998) and as global citizens (Gogia, 2006) through travel's articulations with cultural capital.

Idealized Independent Travel as non-Tourism

In order to subvert or refuse the more overt colonial resonances in contemporary forms of mass tourism, such as the blind consumption of material goods and culture, many people travelling overseas choose the label of "traveler" (Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Munt, 1994). The distinction between travelers and tourists has historical roots in which the implicitly masculine, upper-class exploratory "traveler" was contrasted with the "day-tripper"

associated with women and the middle and lower classes (Grewal, 1996). In contemporary settings, "travel" is intended to differentiate from regimes of mass tourism constituted in the imaginations of travelers as the thoughtless commodification and consumption of tangible goods, tourist services, and an objectified Cultural Other. Within this broader conceptualization of travelers as distinct from tourists, the category "backpacker" is deployed by many travelers to denote a low-budget, culturally sensitive, socially responsible form of travel (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003).

My research is framed by this imaginary category. The category of 'backpacker' is occupied by individuals who operate within Barthes' concept of the "good citizen/subject" as:

> ...incapable of seeing the persistence of exploitative relations between the colonizer and the colonized. The good citizen/subject is "inoculated" from such unpleasant realities. This inoculation occurs through the investment in liberal humanist discourse that shields the subject from the exploitative social relations. Thus, the good citizen/subject takes on a position that appears liberal or open minded while still being complicit in reproducing the structures of racial [or colonial] inequality. (Farough, 2004:246)

Backpackers strive to overcome the mindless commodification and consumption associated with mainstream tourism by building social responsibility and Self-development into travel practices. Yet my interactions with participants made it clear that few people actually considered themselves to be backpackers. Many of the people I interviewed felt obliged to qualify their relationship to the label 'backpacker' because they participated in forms of travel that violated the essence of overseas backpacking by using higher classes of travel or staying in more luxurious (relatively speaking) accommodations.

> It's just easier than carrying a suitcase, it's not, you know I don't um, I'm not looking for all the cheapest, I mean my assumption is backpacking is the cheapest way to travel, you know, that you can, or as cheap as you can, uh, to travel as cheap as you can and I don't really, I can't really do

> that anymore, but uh, I take flights sometimes (laughs), take trains sometimes, but I take flights too. (Vasu)

This reluctance to identify as a 'backpacker' is perhaps evidence of the difficulty in adhering to its idealized standards and the sanctions imposed by other travelers for failing to meet these standards.

Although many travelers were not committed to any particular self-designation – a distinction which led me to use the term "independent traveler" to designate more flexible interpretations of backpacking ideals – most of the travelers with whom I spoke continued to construct and reproduce idealizations of travel that resonated with the purist forms of alternative travel captured in the ideal of backpacking. These ideals emphasized culturally responsible interactions, voluntarily undertaking hardship, and travel as a means to personal growth. Constructions of the idealized backpacker thus encapsulate particular ideologies of appropriate travel and constitute an idealized set of practices through which many independent travelers define and reproduce the subculture of their travel (Sorenson, 2003).

Independent travelers (including backpackers and low-budget travelers) share several interrelated characteristics. They travel for extended periods of time, generally more than four months (Sorenson, 2003; Sprietzhofer, 2002), and during this time they avoid formalized tourist infrastructure. Travelers prefer to make their own travel arrangements (for instance, for transportation and accommodation), an orientation that both facilitates the ability to move frequently on short notice and demonstrates their cultural savvy and competence through the independent navigation of foreign spaces (Sorenson, 2003). In addition, independent travelers are frugal (Sorenson, 2003), emphasizing their budgeting as a requirement of their long term travel and as evidence of

their cultural competence (for instance, the ability to avoid being cheated) and stamina in the face of material hardship.

Collectively, these characteristics help self-identified travelers – backpackers, budget travelers or independent travelers – establish boundaries of distinction from mass tourists (Gogia, 2006; Allon, 2004; Huxley, 2004; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003; Sprietzhofer, 2002). Independent travelers judge their difference from mass tourism through "road status" which can be obtained through "paying 'local prices', getting the best deal, traveling off the beaten track, long-term travel, diseases, dangerous experiences, and more" (Sorenson, 2003:856), all indicators that distinguish between a gritty alternative form of travel and the perceived sanitization of mass tourism.

In my research, almost all of the interview participants differentiated themselves from tourists on the basis of their independence from formalized tourist infrastructures and their socially responsible interactions. In contrast to tourists who, they alleged, had someone to organize their accommodation, transport, and tourist activities, independent travelers undertook the challenge of accomplishing these tasks as constituting travel itself. Unlike tourists' passive experiences, independent travelers understood themselves as agents who actively pursued and negotiated intercultural experiences. From this perspective, independent travel operated as a fetishization of experience through which unique experiences were catalogued:

> It's so much fun [laughs], and I wanna see other things, I wanna meet other people, I wanna, ah, see other people, try different foods. I wanna, um, experience, I want to, smell things, I want to, ah, do things differently, widen my horizons. (Hannah, Norway)

Tied to this desire for experience was an implicit critique of people – read: tourists – who claimed exotic experiences in the anonymous tropical settings of resorts in which

exclusive Western corporate hotels and the activities associated with any warm, seaside place did not require tourists to leave behind the comforts, including the culture, of their home:

> Karl: I mean we're not very hardcore backpackers, we stay at pretty good hotels.
> Emma: good hotels. I like clean bathrooms,
> Karl: and we don't, we, I mean, look out for better restaurants, we don't eat everything like that. So, we're not very hardcore. But I guess, we consider ourselves backpackers.
> Emma: yeah, we haven't stayed in one place more than three days. So we get around, we are just not here relaxing, we travel around to see all India. Where we took the dive class, there was this big Marriott resort. People coming, they were three weeks and never ever left the hotel. They flew like--
> Karl: -- they had a pool, there and everything --
> Emma: -- yeah, they flew from like England, and stayed there for like three weeks. And they couldn't even swim in the ocean because it was forbidden because of currents. So they just laid by the pool all day and then ate at the restaurant and then nothing. And then you can't really say that you have been in India, you haven't seen anything Indian because, it could be everywhere.

This perceived indolence of mass tourists turned on the assumed lack of desire of tourists to engage with the people and places in which they travel. Mass tourists were imagined to be almost entirely removed from the local residents and the actualities of the countries in which they were travelling:

> I suppose tourists just go to the tourist sites on their air-conditioned mini-buses you know, and uh, they never interact with, I mean if they could just do it with from a virtual headset from Europe, they'd probably be able to do that, I suppose travelers are the ones who get down and dirty and take all the budget options, and that sort of thing. (Hardeep)

This assumed insulation of tourists stood in sharp contrast to the desires of many independent travelers to engage meaningfully with local people and to move beyond enclavic tourist sites, which formally directed the readings of tourist spaces and activities (Edensor, 1998).

Contradictions of Independent Travel

In spite of these efforts to differentiate between travelers and tourists, the practices in which travelers (or other forms of self-labelled anti-tourists) participated often blurred the boundaries between tourist and anti-tourist. Independent travel, as an idealized alternative to mainstream tourism, remained an unstable category. One traveler, Conrad, was upset upon meeting the same group of travelers, travelling separately, throughout India. These multiple meetings drew his attention to a highly organized infrastructure operating for independent travel in India. This infrastructure standardizes the alleged uniqueness of off-the-beaten-track travel through networks of travel agents, transportation systems, and, not least of all, Western guidebooks. His repeat encounters with other travelers highlight the similarities between independent travel and mass tourism by conveying the parallel, though distinct, mobilities of tourists and travelers. In contrast to his frustration at being identified as a 'tourist' in off-the-beaten-track settings because of his participation in formal touristic infrastructure, Conrad was comfortable being hailed as a tourist in formal sites that also drew domestic tourists.

> Maybe that's why I don't mind going to these tourist places like temples and historical places, cuz it's not set up for Western tourists, it's set up for every type of tourist, Indian tourists included. (Conrad)

The presence of domestic tourists authenticated the significance of these places and thus enabled him to take up the role of an international tourist. In places to which local Indians did not share the space with Western travelers (such as Palolem beach in Goa and Varkala beach in Kerala), Conrad was dissatisfied with an infrastructure that directly addressed Western travelers. His willingness to participate in overt tourist activities was restricted to areas formally recognized by Indians as tourist sites, a restriction that created a spatialized dichotomy between his activities as a tourist and those as a traveler. For

Conrad, being a maligned tourist was the culmination of being white (a racial categorization he referenced several times during his interview) in a tourist site that (he thought) had no value to Indians.[12]

Other travelers were also aware of travel practices and orientations that blurred the edges between constructions of alternative travel and mass tourism. Although independent travel, as a form of alternative travel, was often represented by participants' desires to have meaningful intercultural interaction, Eli pointed out that backpackers, as the 'ideal' independent travelers, like mainstream tourists, were often guilty of not actively engaging with the communities in which they travelled.

> If you come for a short time, and you come you know, on, only to stay in a hotel and I don't know, eat in fancy restaurants and not really see what's going on, then you got, you did, you won't get the, the experience, the same experience, and backpackers, usually, ah it depends on the backpacker also, but usually... No, it depends on the person to be honest I think, because you can be a backpacker and also not see anything. (Eli)

Other participants took this critique a step further and challenged the very idea of backpacking as an alternate form of tourism. These travelers suggested, like Kontogeorgopoulos (2003), that the only major differences between backpacking and mass tourism were relative budgets and a different tourist infrastructure. Sophie, who was travelling on a more organized trip than most of the other people with whom I spoke, was overtly critical of travelers who sought discovery and claimed road status through their project of independent travel:

> I mean, all these backpackers they think they are independent and they are so cool because they are traveling like nobody else, but that's a, a

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[12] It is noteworthy that in Varkala, the very space that Conrad referred to as a magnet for his frustration, it is not clear that Indian tourists did not find the site to be authentic, but rather the space was policed in the interests of western tourists. For instance, Indian men were not permitted on the sunbathing beach at Varkala, a restriction enforced by other Indian men.

> dream I mean, come on, *Lonely Planet* is all over the world now selling their books and there are such a lot of backpackers I mean, it's not, that, free anymore, I would say, it's a touristic thing like, like, somebody else is booking everything in the United States or in Germany and they have a whole program. I mean it's just the same, everybody is running from *Lonely Planet* plan A to B to C and, I mean it's not independent anymore, what do they think? (Sophie)

In addition to the fetishization of travel experiences, the process of travel itself, as movement, was fetishized as travelers moved about, attempting to find a location before it had developed into a tourist destination. As Palmer (1998) points out, this desire for the uncontaminated results in a transience of off-the-beaten-track spaces, as sites themselves shift over time according to development and the presence of other tourists:

> What results is a 'frontier ethic' that constantly seeks to escape the trappings of 'overdevelopment', whilst leaving unacknowledged the travelers' role in perpetuating that very process. (p.84)

This volatility of tourist destinations represents the economic outcome of individuals' decisions to travel, or not, to particular locales and as such, signifies the unwitting economic impact of individual independent travelers.

Having located an appropriate (read: not overly touristic) space, it was ironic that many travelers – ostensibly seeking meaningful cultural engagement – were intent on moving through the space as quickly as possible. After a place had been consumed aesthetically and experientially (often something that was claimed as quickly as a couple of days or even hours) by participants, there was no reason to remain. While many travelers spoke to the desire to keep moving, one participant articulated this momentum in terms of desire to be awestruck:

> I think when you travel you just have these uh, these future expectations that you just keep on relying on, right and you're just like oh I'll get on the bus, maybe it'll be better in the next spot. You keep just hopping on a bus. That's what I do. That's why I've been taking one or two buses each day, just to get to the next spot. [...] You plan on all these

> awesome like, this would be so great to go to this place and then you finally reach there and you're like ahh [sighs with disappointment], where'd be another super great place to go to? Oh this'd be super good, or this place. And then you sit in that place, oh this would be the next super great place (laughing). It's disappointing. (Conrad)

For Conrad, as for many of the other travelers with whom I spoke, movement was a means by which to explain and justify the chasms between travelers' desires for idealized 'authentic' and 'meaningful' intercultural encounters and their perceived lack of such experiences (Hottola, 2005).

Hardship and Structural Privilege

Given the übermobility of independent travelers (Gogia, 2006), establishing meaningful social interactions with locals was very difficult. An alternative approach through which independent travelers sought meaning was through the participation in the perceived lifestyles of locals. The inability to meet the Other was transformed into an effort to perform the Other. In the Third World, this ostensibly shared experience represents a form of extreme class inversion in which higher-class individuals seek out lower-class experiences through self-denial in their tourism practices (McCabe, 2005). While independent travelers are required to budget in order to enable their long-term travel, Sorenson (2003) argues that backpackers are overly preoccupied with not spending money and often operate with a frugality that exceeds necessity in order to accumulate road status – hierarchical policing of travelers based on "hardship, experience, competence, cheap travel, along with the ability to communicate it properly" (Sorenson, 2003:856). These pursuits of poverty and hardship are punctuated with periods in which travelers indulge in experiences they could not afford in their own countries (Azarya, 2004) such as spa treatments and participation in adventure activities. Yet through their

participation in some form of hardship, independent travelers mirror the lives of ostensibly authentic Others, Others whose authenticity is often marked by their poverty (O'Reilly, 2006).

In many instances, travelers chose poverty through low-class forms of travel and cheap hotel rooms in order to demonstrate their road status and be accepted by the broader group of travelers. This characteristically (or perhaps notoriously) cheap travel also constitutes a confrontation towards the capitalist push for incessant consumption while abroad. This logic of frugality suggests that spending minimal amounts on basic needs and bargaining (to excess) can challenge the cycle of commodification:

> Backpacker to me would mean someone who is living, I think living or trying to live cheaply. Traveling cheaply. Getting away from the comforts like but comforty, comfortable, comfort hotels, traveling around the way the locals would rather than getting on, if you know, chartered, chartered planes or buses or things like that. Traveling with minimal bare essentials, like you know, as much as you need. (Nigel)

Yet in this drive to live cheaply, travelers' decisions to act in a socially responsible way compete with the fear of being cheated, an experience that compromises not just money but also road status, forcing a choice between road status vis-à-vis other travelers and social responsibility vis-à-vis local Indians (see Chapter 6). Moreover, while 'ideal' independent travelers invoke frugality as a means to occupy impoverished subject locations during their travel, this desire for poverty is possible precisely because of the transient nature of their travel. The standard of living of travelers in their home countries transforms sleeping in poor quality accommodation or traveling by uncomfortable and unsafe means into novelty experiences.

The economic hardship that is actively constructed by many independent travelers is part of a temporary imaginary of not just seeing, but being the Other. Yet, this Other

status is only desirable with the knowledge that personal comforts and status are not permanently at risk as the suffering endured by independent travelers is contextualized by the economic and political privilege they possess. If anything, travelers' standards of living will be improved upon their return home because of their accumulation of cultural capital (Desforges, 2000; Munt, 1994).

Temporary hardship also provides experiences through which individuals can stage claims to liberal Self-development (Obenour, 2004). Through their experiences of difficulty, travelers are able to challenge the frameworks through which their trips are understood: the pleasurable and self-indulgent aspects of tourism and vacationing are effaced and replaced with emphases on personal outlook, challenges, endurance, and suffering, producing an ascetic innocence. The liberal norms of individual accomplishment and meritocracy are played out through travelers' ability to embrace the hardships of travel, to succeed by surviving the difficult times, and to change as a person. This process of Self-development is another means by which travelers build their cultural capital.

Narrating Independent Travel and Constructing the Self

Because of the demands to prove competence in the face of adversity – adversity that is often self-generated through excessive frugality – narratives of independent travel include, by necessity, just as many, if not more, hardships than highlights (Sorenson, 2003). Through narrations of this hardship to appropriate audiences, travelers achieve road status (Sorenson, 2003) and cultural capital (Munt, 1994). The difficulty and suffering that characterizes independent travel in travelers' narratives, including those in formal travel guides, is one means through which hardship emerges as an aesthetic of travel. It is through this suffering that independent travelers can make claims to road status

(Sorenson, 2003). Stories of long and dangerous bus rides to see disappointing or closed temples, for example, are integral to the narratives of independent travelers as proof that they have taken risks (Gogia, 2006) and suffered misfortune (Sorenson, 2003). Moreover, this hardship, although it is typically voluntary, denies the privileged statuses that independent travelers enjoy. As such, it is a means through which independent travelers can construct themselves as individuals defined only by immediate time and space. Hardship, then, is a means through which individuals attempt to step outside of their situatedness and thus is significant to the social construction of innocence.

Experiences of hardship also speak to the paucity of the country as a tourist destination – the inefficient bureaucracy, the impassable roads, the poor overall infrastructure – again highlighting the risks and subsequent adventures of independent travelers. These constructions of the Indian Other reinforce perceptions of Western supranational superiority (Balibar, 1990) and the nation as a community (Bell, 2002). Narratives of hardship set against a culturally exotic Other also provide travelers with the opportunity to actively construct the liberal Self that underpins their travel.

The travelers with whom I spoke were very conscious of the practices of constructing appropriate stories of their travels to share with friends, families, and other travelers upon their return home.

> I think some people do go and see, get a bit of a, try to go and see, get a bit of a shock because it motivates you and you go, because you go 'oh my God, in Varanasi I saw a floating corpse going down the river,' or what these people do, you know, so I'm sure that they were just going to see the poverty, but that's part of the story they tell when they go back. (Hardeep)

> You can always brag about being in Varanasi in the worst place, saw the poorest people around the earth and ate the worst and, and eh, (sighs) and unclean and I'm looking for better word, for the worst food you ever probably eat. So uh, these all part of trip. (Gal)

These narratives have significance for both the traveler and the country they represent. Not only do travelers accrue 'bragging rights', but nations themselves are constructed through the international travel of their citizens. For instance, through the ritualization of the Overseas Experience for New Zealand's youth, travelers accumulate expert knowledge of another country, cultural capital and the opportunity to reflect upon their own culture (Bell, 2002). In addition, because of their conduct overseas (typically as temporary workers in the UK), New Zealanders have build up an international reputation as being industrious and adaptable (Bell, 2002).[13]

Given this process of developing Self and Nation through a liberal celebration of diversity, the pressure on travelers to enjoy their time overseas is immense. Yet this necessary enjoyment contradicts the hardships that help to define independent travel. For travelers to admit that they do not like a place violates the adventurous and all-embracing spirit of travel. This act also refuses the endorsement of the guidebook, which is narrated so that "any reasonable person is expected to agree" not only with respect to substantive travel commentary (Bhattacharyya, 1997:375), but also with the ontologies that underpin independent travel. The negative reaction of a traveler to a foreign space violates the celebration of diversity and the desirability of travel portrayed in popular culture such as magazines (*Outpost*) and television series (*Pilot Guides*, *Don't Forget Your Passport*, and *Backpackers*) dedicated to providing travel know-how, as well as in fiction (including *The Beach* (Garland, 1997) and *Are You Experienced?* (Sutcliffe, 1998)), and in mainstream reality television (*The Amazing Race* and *Survivor*).

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[13] For some countries, the reputation built upon the behaviours of their travelers may not be so favourable. See, for instance, Maoz (2006) on the response of some tourism operators to Israeli backpackers.

As such, travelers actively constructed narratives for other travelers and for people at home that represented what they perceived as an appropriate environment for their audience:

> You tell people the really wonderful stuff, you don't really tell them the mundane, kind of everyday stuff that's not so wonderful but isn't so bad, you don't tell them that. And then you tell them stuff that's like funny awful. And then the really awful stuff you don't tell them.... I've been saying before that I think that people want, don't want to hear the bad things and maybe that's not necessarily true, but people also don't want to hear oh it's so wonderful, everything was so wonderful, like I hate hearing that, when I hear that I think, 'you're only telling me one side of the story' because India is known, any developing country is known as not being an easy place to travel, so I think people want some reality, but they want it sugar-coated... (Lexi)

The narratives to which Lexi referred tread the delicate line of constructing difference, yet – in the liberal spirit of diversity and multiculturalism – do not overtly impose negative judgment upon this difference. They further construct the traveler through the liberal lens of meritocracy as someone who comes to triumph through their trials and is thus deserving of any privileges they incur or claims to entitlement they make. The majority of travel narratives that emerged in my interviews or through casual conversation adhered to these liberal norms, with the result that they did not challenge broader discourses or practices that were simultaneously operating.

In the majority of instances, travelers reproduced the representations of Others that are dominant, and stereotypical, in their home countries. Like backpackers who reproduce the photographs that were presented to them as the reason to travel to a particular destination in the first place (Jenkins, 2003), the travelers with whom I spoke narrated India and Indians in a way that mirrored Orientalist perspectives:

> We want to make more of life, we want to get more money, we want to be, build a bigger house or we want to have our family, we want to buy rich and they don't care about that because what matters is not the

> material things, it's the soul, it's the way it goes on and on and in the next life, maybe it will be better but this life, this is how I was born and this is how I'm going to, going to die. So they don't have this race after life, have to be, have to be having more. (Rina)

These perspectives, which construct Indians as homogeneous in their spirituality and happiness in poverty (O'Reilly, 2006), provide the cultural signifiers through which macrolevel political and economic policies can deny the subjectivities of Third World citizens and impose poverty upon poor peoples and poor countries, while meeting with indifference from the majority of citizens in the First World.

Although most of the people with whom I spoke discussed their travel in ways that were consistent with liberal expectations of Self-development and diversity, two did not share in this celebration of their travel experiences. Notably, they were both reluctant to elaborate the differences between their expectations and their experiences, a reluctance undoubtedly infused by both representations of travel in popular culture and the carefully constructed narratives of other travelers. Some travelers explicitly addressed this tension and problematized the need to package their experiences for relatively uninterested audiences. Lexi continued her commentary on narrating her experiences, speaking about the intense homesickness she experienced while travelling. This feeling, she observed, was not something that could be transformed into a funny story and it did not demonstrate her perseverance in the face of adversity. As such, it did not meet the requirements for an appropriate travel narrative upon her return: "people don't want the reality 'I was so homesick, I cried.'" Susan actively refused the requirement to mould her experiences into short humorous or glorious excerpts that reproduced the hegemonic casualness of travel narratives:

> I always find it really difficult to wrap up my experience in like a sentence or whatever, or you know, dinner or something [...] I have an experience

> for three months or whatever and I can't do that justice with anything I say, or even pictures, you know, and I don't, and it's hard for me to and I feel that sometimes people when they talk to you, they hear things that they want to hear 'oh ok, so you didn't have electricity in Tanzania' you know, like they pick up on things that they kind of, that they place more importance or emphasis on, certain things they hear. So I don't know, a lot of times I find myself withdrawing kind of like I don't know, I don't really want to talk to people about my experience because I don't want it to get packaged in this thing. (Susan)

The social requirement to condense travel narratives to travelers' most difficult and most successfully navigated – if only upon reflection or narration – moments was echoed in one traveler's comparison of backpacking with extreme sports:

> The backpacker, it kind of reminds me of an extreme, you know what they call extreme sports, kind of movement now, you know where you do things for the thrill of it, you do things that are really dangerous, but really exciting, you know, it sorted of reminded me a little bit of that, travelling is sort of an extreme sport for some people. (Vasu)

Vasu's comment highlights the intensity and risk that, alongside a triumphant conclusion, have been actively woven through idealized practices and narratives of travel in order to retain connections with their exploration and 'discovery' predecessors, practices and narratives that continue to operate within the exploration of foreign geographies and exotic Others in search of the Self.

Concluding Remarks

The development of the Self depends upon the recognition and valuation of travelers' experiences and thus requires collectives within which this experience can be recognized and commended. Yet road status and recognition are achieved through claims to unique individual experiences, experiences marked by "the simultaneous struggles to be seamlessly meshed in the social fabric and to signal oneself as a being with specificity" (Davies, 2000:21). While this tension between individuals and collectives characterizes

modernity more generally (Berman, 1988), it is exacerbated in the context of independent travel, in which identity-building operates in active resistance to the mass identity of the tourist, as well as against those identities defined by work, obligation, responsibility and daily regimes in travelers' more permanent locales (Urry, 1990:5-6). The emphasis on the individual in independent travel is resolved through road status, a set of norms through which individuals' attitudes and experiences can be judged by themselves and by other travelers.

The reliance of independent travel upon unique experiences, which are important abroad as well as for exhibit at home, troubles its ascriptions to culturally responsible and benign travel. The off-the-beaten-track desires for virginal exploration and discovery that underpin independent travel lead to more insidious forms of interaction, in which travelers come to invade the private spaces of locals, often along classed, racialized, and gendered lines (Palmer, 1998). Ultimately, efforts to get away from city centres and from other tourists and travelers are underpinned by notions of authenticity that can be located in pristine spaces and uncontaminated peoples. These efforts are closely bound to identity-building practices:

> Backpackers may be viewed as "authenticist" tourists, as authenticity-related themes are centrally incorporated in their accounts. They insist on seeking "untouched" and "unspoiled" destinations, often located in rural – but nonetheless touristic – regions. In choosing to take a trip to such places they pursue 'hot authenticity', which means they quest for authentic destinations and, at the same, their authentic selves. (Noy, 2004:85)

The process of identification, which Fuss argues is "neither a historically universal concept nor a politically innocent one" (1995:114), is complicated by ostensibly benign travel in the global context of unequal citizenship, wealth, and mobility. Post-colonial

theorists refuse liberalism's implicit distinction of individuals from their state (Sartre, 2001) and the broader global patterns of mobility and wealth (Choules, 2006; Gogia, 2006).

In his rejection of the "colonial" in North Africa, Memmi specifically addresses the impossibility of individualism. The colonial – "a European living in a colony but having no privileges.... a benevolent European who does not have the colonizer's attitude toward the colonized" (Memmi, 1965:10) – may consciously reject the implicit and explicit domination of the colonial arrangement within which they are necessarily embedded. Yet they are not able to extricate themselves from broader relations and practices:

> The colonial does not exist, because it is not up to the European in the colonies to remain a colonial, even if he had so intended. Whether he expressly wishes it or not, he is received as a privileged person by the institutions, customs and people. From the time he lands or is born, he finds himself in a factual position which is common to all Europeans living in a colony, a position which turns him into a colonizer. (Memmi, 1965:17)

A colonial possesses freedoms that the colonized do not, freedoms that are inscribed in social structures and institutions and that are repeated by both colonizer and colonized. This pervasive and persisting freedom makes it impossible for a colonial to refuse his or her ties to colonizer status. Although more contemporary post-colonial writing has problematized this dichotomy between colonizer and colonized (Bhabha, 2004; Bhattacharyya, Gabriel and Small, 2002), the articulations between individuals and social structures that Memmi identifies provide a useful lens through which to reflect upon independent travel.

Structural privilege haunts contemporary travelers who are embedded in globalized economic, citizenship and bourgeois statuses relative to the places that they visit. Like archetypical colonial identities, the identities of independent travelers remain deeply embedded in the spaces *from* which they travel. Yet the emphasis on the individual

enables independent travelers to dissociate themselves from the broader historical, social, political, and economic relationships (and associated inequalities). It is through the social construction of innocence, then, that independent travelers – as ostensibly acontextualized individuals – are able to negotiate the contradiction between their desire for socially responsible and culturally sensitive travel and the global inequalities that enable that travel.

IV. Defining "Real India": Representations of Authenticity in Independent Travel[14]

Travel is a means through which representations of both Self and Other are actively created (Richards and Wilson, 2004; Galani-Moutafi, 2000). Independent travel is invested with meaning as a benign alternative mode of travel through its active engagement with local culture and its construction of innocence vis-à-vis mass tourism (Gogia, 2006; Allon, 2004; Huxley, 2004; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003; Sprietzhofer, 2002). Both the cultural basis of independent travel and its innocence as an alternate mode of tourism are brought into being through the construction of difference between travelers and India and Indians. This distinction between Indians and travelers – reinscribed through travelers' search for 'authentic' experiences – is achieved through objectifying neo-colonial discourses (Bhattacharrya, 1997; Behdad, 1994) and is necessary to give meaning to independent travel. In the context of travel to so-called developing countries, including India, constructions of Otherness (re)emerge through the persistent legacies of colonial relations that mediate practices of travel.

This search for authenticity is not restricted to a cultural realm as it is made possible by material relations. Constructions of Otherness require "sufficient levels of disposable income for some ... citizens to indulge in their desire to travel to what are popularly constructed as 'exotic' lands where they can gaze at the imagined 'Other'" (Palmer, 1998:7). Thus, the material advantage possessed by Western travelers enables their gaze upon Indians[15], particularly as this gaze is actively produced to create an idealized object that does not draw attention to the structural inequalities within which

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[14] A version of this chapter has been accepted for publication. Lozanski forthcoming. *Social Identities*.
[15] For an analysis of the reciprocal gaze, see Chapter 6.

travel to India occurs. In addition to identifying the colonial tropes of poverty and spirituality as persisting characteristics in travelers' representations of Indian Others and Otherness, I will also analyze the significance of these representations. By seeking non-commodified, intimate relationships with local Indians – those without a vested interest in friendship with a foreigner – travelers construct some Indians as objects of their desire while other Indians are represented with distain. In this, many travelers project onto Indians a desire for intimacy at the same time that they project difference and disgust (Bhattacharyya, Gabriel, and Small, 2002). For both of these analyses, I will pay particular attention to those moments in which these discourses fail as these moments represent points of fragility and thus points of possibility for moving beyond contemporary instantiations of colonialism (Bhabha, 2004).

Orientalist fantasies and colonialist tropes are deeply engrained in the travel imagination of independent travelers, including those who also identify as liberal and subscribe to anti-racism and anti-globalization projects (O'Reilly, 2006). This subscription to liberal tenets also includes the celebration of diversity, which both constructs and facilitates travelers' desire to see cultural Others – a central feature of backpacking (Maoz, 2006) and of many Western societies more generally (Huxley, 2004). At the same time that racialized and gendered colonial representations are reproduced through the very practice of travel (see Gogia, 2006; O'Reilly, 2006; Pratt, 1992), this reproduction is denied through appeals to liberalism. Appealing to the celebration of diversity and self-development, travelers continue to draw on the "strategies of representation whereby European [or Western] bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European [or Western] hegemony" (Pratt, 1992:7). In the context of independent travel, these strategies involve attempts to de-commodify travel practices

and travelers' search for meaningful cultural interaction, strategies that are further analyzed below.

In travel to developing countries in particular, travel is predicated on difference. In tourism in developing countries, Azarya suggests that "the great majority of [tourists] come to view inferior natives whom they have no desire to emulate. From the centrality of their own existence they are curious about the *margins* of human existence" (2004:956). This difference operates not just at the level of travelers' experiences, but also within the infrastructure of travel. The marketing of authenticity in Third World countries actively propagates and relies upon travel as an encounter with difference:

> It seems that tourists and indigenous peoples are incommensurately different within the touristic process, and indigenous peoples can only continue to be attractive to tourists so long as they remain undeveloped, and, hence, in some sense primitive. To the extent that natives attempt to become what they see as more equal (more developed), they will inevitably lose their appeal, and more importantly their value, to Western tourists. (Silver, 1993:310)

This fantasized difference implicitly juxtaposes ideal types of objectified exotic cultural Others against ostensibly neutral and unmarked Western traveling individuals. This distinction is also reiterated by guidebooks such as the *Lonely Planet* (Gogia, 2002; Bhattacharyya, 1997), local travel agents and guides (Conran, 2006; Palmer, 1998), and Western travel agents who are more driven by profit motives to market authenticity than by any sensitivity towards "representing indigenous peoples in a fair and accurate manner" (Silver, 1993:202). Speaking to the issue of cultural representation, these comments are infused with assumptions of truth and authenticity. Yet read as a challenge to the objectified Other through which alternative, cultural travel is constituted, Silver's call for fair

and accurate representation challenges liberal discourses of innocence and Otherness by announcing the subjectivity of indigenous peoples cast as cultural others.[16]

The Self of Budget Travel

Many independent travelers do not have the financial resources to achieve status through participation in travel that grants cultural capital through its chic (Silver, 1993) or ecological sustainability (Duffy, 2004; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003). Instead, independent budget travelers draw cultural capital from their participation in practices of travel that prioritize individual travel abilities such as cross-cultural prowess and the ability to withstand hardship as means by which to contribute to the status of their travel (Sorenson, 2003). Indians and India, then, are the means through which the self can be defined and developed.

> Romanticism, combined with the scientific imperative, enabled exploration and mapping the search for the noble savage, for the "Other" required by the Romantic self to be complete. This was a search for the past, for what was authentic in contrast to the alienation of the industrial age, and led to a new perception of nature within the discourse of the needs of the all-important self. (Grewal, 1996:137)

The Otherness encountered in travel to allegedly exotic spaces represents distinction not only in terms of culture, but also in terms of subjectivity. The presence of cultural Others, imagined as objects, provides a backdrop against which travelers – constituted as subjects through the social imaginary of travel as exploration and discovery (Blunt, 1994) – can not only act as agents, but can reflect upon their agency through processes of "personal growth."

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[16] Agents outside of the travel industry are also implicated in the construction of innocent difference. Palmer (1998) and Pritchard and Morgan (2000) both implicate the governments of tourism destinations for their direct contributions to representations of cultural Otherness.

This self-development is tangled with the search for authenticity in travel to the Third World (Maoz, 2006), in which the cultural Other is the *raison d'etre* of travel (Azarya, 2004). While the bourgeois travelers may contribute to their status through the purchase of exclusive, yet socially responsible travel (also in contrast to mass tourism), many budget travelers instead invoke non-commodification as a means to designate uncontaminated interactions with the people and places of their travel and thus authenticity. This authenticity is achieved, Kontogeorgopoulos (2003) argues, through the construction of difference from the West, a lack of commodification, and a scarcity of other tourists, who would necessarily compromise the uniqueness of the experience. Although independent travel itself resists commodification, the desire for authenticity upon which it is predicated ultimately leads authenticity itself to become commodified through its necessary requirement for scarcity: "the more obscure the destination and rigorous the travel, therefore, the better the social stature accorded to adventurers" (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003:196). In addition to geographies of obscurity, this analysis also stresses cultural Indians Others as focus of many travelers' search to find "the real India."

Authentic India?

As a practice, independent travel is structured around cultural Otherness, an imaginary that is (re)produced through histories of colonialism. In these contexts of cultural travel, the antithesis between authenticity and tourism, set up by MacCannell (1976) and disputed by Urry (2002) and Olsen (2002), is precisely the inconsistency upon which alternative modes of travel are predicated: independent travelers have a vested interest in defining their travel experiences as 'authentic' in order to differentiate

themselves from tourists who are assumed to see only culture that has been staged for their benefit.

Moreover, travelers and tourists who are participating culturally-based travel are not necessarily interested in post-modern understandings of the cultural Other or their relationship to that Other (Maoz, 2006; Bruner, 2005). Although travelers claim the cultural context of production of souvenirs as a means of cultural capital for the items they return with, these tourists are typically satisfied with a limited or superficial understanding of the production of those goods (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2003).

When I asked participants whether they thought a "real India"[17] existed, and if so, if they could describe it, many participants were not comfortable with the idea of a singular or an attainable authenticity.

> What is authentic India? Is there authentic India? It's not, there isn't authentic India actually, as much as I travel I see there are so many cultures inside cultures. (Gal)

> I think [the idea of 'real' India] is crap [laughs] because, you're tourist, or traveler. Um, um, you're never gonna find it by just, watching it. You have to realize that, um, when you're traveling in a train, and, you know, I'm white person and, wearing my clothes, it's always gonna be different. If you realize it's gonna be different, then it's ok, then it's real India, for me. I mean this is my experience and I'm just gonna enjoy it, I'm not gonna try to exchange it for something else, because I want to enjoy India as a traveler, because I am. I am a backpacker and that's how I enjoy it. I don't want to sleep out on the street just because it's real India. I think real India is where I sleep and how I feel. (Hannah)

Although both of these participants refuse the idea of Indian authenticity in their travel, both follow this statement (Gal, immediately) with a comment that encapsulates some commitment to an idealized India:

> I saw in, in the big cities, like say Bangalore, that the Indians there they are not really Indians because they all speak English and they all try to

[17] I have taken this phrase as a direct quote from participants in early interviews.

> look Western and they speak English with themselves and even if you speak in Hindi to them, they like don't understand you. Which, this is strange. So I can't put my finger on exact, how do Indian people should look like. If I had to, also I probably say looks like a person who doesn't mind of money, he doesn't look for being rich, he just, comfortable with his situation, he has a salary, his money, and if he has enough food for one week, he won't think about the next. (Gal)

Gal's comment supports Silver's (1993) claim that, once the imagined essential difference between people living in the 'Third World' and Western travelers is ruptured, those people lose appeal to tourist tastes. In Gal's case, the fact that some Bangaloreans use English as a first language compromises their status as 'real' Indians. An 'authentic' Indian, by contrast, speaks Hindi (not the local Kannada language) and is happy with his status, requiring only food to survive. Hannah also draws on colonial discourses to construct locals in terms of difference when describing one of her favourite experiences:

> Yesterday in Mumbai, it was a really good day because we went into a, into a harbour, into a dock? And so all the fishing boats and all the ladies, ladies, picking the shrimps, it was really wonderful, and we were just walking around and this really bad smell and, all the people looking at us, oh, just, wonderful day yesterday. (Hannah)

Together, these constructions sketch a portrait of what 'real' India and Indians are understood to be, even though both Gal and Hannah explicitly refused such a formulation of India. Although many independent travelers consider themselves to be more culturally responsible and sensitive than other tourists:

> Watered down versions of these [Orientalist] ideas can be heard from even the most apparently liberal [backpackers]. Some approach the quest for 'authentic' others with a degree of postmodern irony, but for many there is a genuine desire to experience what they consider a more exotic or more 'real' way of life. (O'Reilly, 2006:1004)

Both Hannah and Gal, and many others, drew on representations of Indians that recalled broader discourses of authenticity as read through cultural Otherness and exoticization. In 'real' India, people sleep on the streets, senses are overloaded (by, for

instance, smelly shrimp) and the Western traveler is an exotic Other to Indians; 'real' Indians do not speak English to each other and seek only to satisfy their most basic needs. These specific examples highlight the discourses of cultural Otherness that give meaning to travelers' practices in India. These discourses construct India as aesthetic, poor, and non-commodified – a construction that sits comfortably with the cultural Other and experiences of hardship that underpin formulations of Self. Within these parameters, real Indians are imagined as people who live simple lives and are happy with the few things they have (Maoz, 2006), in contrast to Westerns who, it is assumed, are driven to perpetual achievement and accumulation. The comments by Gal and Hannah align fantasies of cultural Others steeped in historical practices of exploration and 'discovery':

> The 'natural' native who has never set eyes on a white person; a nostalgic and naïve view of the 'traditional' life found outside the West, untouched by modernity but now rapidly disappearing; and the simple, 'happy' native who gets by with very little and appears not to mind living in poverty.... (O'Reilly, 2006:1003)

These particular expectations of Indians culminate in a guiding, yet implicit, discourse of authenticity that underpins the construction of independent travel and travelers as it provides a means through which to articulate difference vis-à-vis mass tourism.

In her analysis of hill trekkers in Thailand, Palmer (1998) argues that the desire of these travelers to see the "long necks" – women with multiple rings around their necks – regardless of cultural tradition has driven many indigenous tribes who did not engage such practices to begin to put rings around the necks of women as a means to bring in tourist income. This chasm between what travelers perceive as 'authenticity' and the traditional legacies of a particular cultural practice led Palmer to suggest that travelers might be happier in showcase centres of Thai culture, "a Disneyland of signification where the fake seems more real than the real, the ultimate travel in hyper-reality" (1998:78). Yet the very

practice of formalizing authenticity – regardless of its parallels or discrepancies with traditional cultural practices – troubles travelers' perceptions of authenticity. In formalized tourist spaces – enclavic tourist spaces – infrastructure such as signs and pathways direct tourists in their physical movement as well as the semiotic sense they make of culture around them (Edensor, 1998). However, independent travelers are cynical towards mass tourists and organized or formalized touristic spaces although some, like Daniel, understood themselves to occupy, at least in part, tourist subject positions.

> I'm seeing myself as a tourist because I'm spending so much money and doing all the stuff that tourists do. But I'm trying to, you know, to do this traveler stuff that only travel, to travel and to see and experience my own, not to guide, take some Indian guide who will take me and want to rip me off for my money, so I do things my way, this is like trouble doing this but I'm a tourist now. (Daniel)

Efforts to direct travelers' mobility through spaces or their interpretations of cultural material immediately interpellate them as tourists, who accept third party mediation – by way of institutionalized signage or guides – of cultural semiotics and experiences. The intervention of a third party (with any evident relationship to the formalized space) between culture and traveler draws attention to the performativity of exoticism, which necessarily taints authenticity according to Western ways of thinking (Larsen, 2005) as well as compromising the intimacy of a given interaction.

> I think [making do without comforts is] a part of traveling as opposed to like maybe, like packaged tours where you get on a bus, you get off the bus, you take a photograph, you buy something you get back on the bus, you never stop, you never walk along the street, you never shake hands with the locals, you never sit with the locals, like today I sat with the local guy in his little store for an hour or two just chatting, you know. (Ian)

Authenticity through Intimacy

In addition to authenticity, independent travelers want cultural experiences marked by intimate encounters with their exotic 'hosts' (Conran, 2006). The disappointments cited

by many of the hill-trekkers with whom Conran spoke included insufficient opportunities to speak with their so-called hosts, the lack of hosts' friendliness and interest in the travelers, and the presence of too many travelers, which made the situation appear commodified. Conran (2006) also found that travelers in Thailand had hoped to experience the life of the Karen people, rather than simply observe it, and, much like the hill trekkers in Palmer's (1998) research, were willing to sacrifice claims to cultural tradition in order to achieve a particular desired experience:

> The Western tourist perceives the other as persons to be intimately experienced rather than as an object of their gaze.... Ultimately, the intimate experience supersedes the desire for object authenticity, which may be perceived as superficial or secondary to the more humanist desire for reciprocal interaction. (Conran, 2006:275)

In interactions with local people, intimacy comes to stand in for claims to cultural authenticity as travelers' "inability to participate in the lives of the Karen people beyond the 'tourist gaze' was expressed as an inability to have a truly 'authentic' experience" (Conran, 2006:282). Unlike tourists who are perceived to have superficial cultural encounters and may, at best, observe staged aspects of cultural authenticity (their very authenticity called into question by their public, enclavic performance), many independent travelers judge meaningful cultural encounters through the private spontaneity that characterizes intimacy.

Intimacy takes place in private spaces and is considered part of "'real life'" (Conran, 2006:275). This everydayness connects intimacy to authenticity, defined as the "routine aspects of mundane quotidian existence, reproduced on an everyday basis, and located outside of the tourist centers and infrastructure" (Huxley, 2004:43). At first glance, this desire for intimacy appears inconsistent with other colonial discourses, in particular the distancing that operates, for instance, through scientific practices of naming and categorization (Pratt, 1992). However, the practice of constructing boundaries and spaces

between the shifting categories of colonizer and colonized, crudely sketched, reflect the ultimate failure of such boundaries. These boundaries are continually compromised not only by shifting infrastructures of power and by varying marginalizations based on gendered, racialized and classed exclusions, but also by desire for the other, which operates across colonial subject positions, such as the desire of the colonized black to be white, and through this, the desire for white women (Fanon, 1967). The obverse desire emerges for colonizers who refuse their colonial status (Memmi, 1965). For these people, "it is not enough to accept the position of the colonized, it is necessary to be loved by them" (Memmi,1965:37). The desire to be desired buttresses the innocence through which independent travel operates by emphasizing intimate relationships between individual travelers and individual locals. This framing of travel as an interaction between specific people obscures the structural economic, political and social relations that contextualize the interactions between traveler and traveled.

The possibility of being "loved" by Others is contextualized by a broad infrastructure that imposes difference – and distance – through discrepancies of racialization, class, nationality and mobility. Travel in particular is underpinned by a sense of colonial entitlement in which other cultures are objects for travelers not only to observe, but to understand and know (O'Reilly, 2006). In (neo)colonial settings, the Other (as defined through a multiplicity of colonial relations) is desired intimately as a means to power, manifested either in terms of inclusion (Fanon, 1967; Memmi, 1965) or knowledge (O'Reilly, 2006). Desire and distance operate in tandem as a means through which to know and be known by the Other without putting at risk the structurally embedded colonial status that makes this knowledge and desire the purview of travelers.

Non-Commodification as a Signifier of Intimacy

Intimacy and authenticity collapse in spaces and interactions read as non-commodified:

> The most authentic cultural practices and objects appear to be those that not only faithfully imitate an inherited set of practices and objects, but also are reproduced in a specific locale, by a specific type of people, and for a specific purpose, one unconnected to the market process. (Shepherd, 2002:192)

This pursuit of non-commodification is recognized by locals and entrepreneurs who stand to make a profit from the veiled sale of cultural encounters:

> A desire to promote feelings of family and community also leads to the deliberate concealment of commercialized interactions. Tour leaders ensure that commercial transactions with Thais occur beyond the immediate gaze of adventurers who, buoyed by the sense that they are participating in genuine cultural interactions with locals, are convinced that their overnight homestays stem principally from an intrinsic Thai hospitality and generosity rather than from the financial rationale often driving these, and other, encounters between adventurers and Thais. (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003:188)

Similarly, in Indigenous tourist sites in southern Alberta, Canada, Indigenous peoples were active collaborators in the suppression of commodification, emphasizing instead the spiritual aspects of the cultural experience (Deutschlander and Miller, 2003). Interactions with local peoples in contexts of mundane, everyday life, devoid of monetary transactions, are precisely the practices that are absent in enclavic tourist sites and that define idealized off-the-beaten-track travel. The invisibility of commodification with authentic peoples in authentic places is another means through which innocence is constructed. The apparent absence of commodification assures travelers that their experiences are occurring outside the capitalist market, in which those with capital are bestowed with power at the expense of those without.

Although independent travelers may seek authenticity through the absence of commodification in such seemingly non-commodified spaces, locals appropriate this desire. Rather than providing meaningful cultural interaction devoid of capitalist exchanged, cultural Others instead embed this exchange within yet another layer of performance as a means to cloak the monetary basis for transaction and provide the traveler (also tourist) with an intimate cultural experience (Maoz, 2006; Doron, 2005). Sometimes, the commodified exchange is unmasked after a traveler has become invested in the intimacy of their encounter. For Nigel, one of his favourite experiences was compromised by the contradiction between village people who lived with very little and the parting request for gifts:

> I think my best experience was in Ooty where we did a little bit of a trek, or a hike through the hills. And came across a tribal village called Toda [indigenous] villages. And we actually got the chance to go into their huts, have tea and a meal with them, I think it was just eye-opening to realize that people can still live so simply, they didn't have any electricity, any kind of running water, they, and they're all very hospitable they cooked us a meal, they offered us food, they offered us presents, and I managed to play cricket with the children. And I think like, that was probably my most favourite experience, mixing with the locals. Just opening my eyes to how people can still live on nothing. Get through the day (Nigel)

At the end of his visit, the children asked Nigel for pens. Nigel expressed disappointment that the children were interested in a Western object for which they had no use, given their illiteracy. Yet these demands by the children represent not only Westernization, but also a marring of the seemingly unmediated generosity of the village people, an indiscretion that emphasizes the reciprocity that underpins capitalist exchange and thus indicates commodification.

> I think they sort of, sort of looks like they expected it [i.e. the pens] in return. So we ended up giving them something. But, I think I would've

> been, I think it just would've felt a lot nicer if it was just something that they were doing from their own, I don't know, heart you know. (Nigel)

Several of the travelers I spoke with were overt in their desire for and pursuit of intimate, authentic interactions with local Indians, interactions that occurred outside of monetary exchange. For one traveler, Ian, quotidian intimate interactions were the *modus operandi* of his travel:

> How they live their lives, what they do, what's their day like, the day, each day what do they do? You know, what's their lifestyle? What's their living standard? Everything [...], I hope it sounds like I want it to sound, but it's literally a matter of getting into people's homes, not to scam them or anything, but literally just sit with them. I mean obviously try to offer as much as you can but um yeah, it's literally getting into people's homes and hanging. (Ian)

Intimacy, as Ian imagined it, was spatialized as it involved access to private, otherwise inaccessible spaces.

Other travelers were less forward about their desire to have intimate intercultural interactions. Yet their descriptions of their ideal experiences in India spoke to this underlying discourse of authenticity that could be achieved through a particular type of interaction (non-commodified) with a particular type of Indian (see below):

> One thing I ah did in Ranakpur was to go and sit with a family for 4 hours and just hang out with them you know, not a soul in sight, no tourists, nothing. It was good just to hang out, we didn't, I didn't know how to speak their local language. They didn't know how to speak Hindi so none of the Hindi words I knew made any sense. And no, no one knew how to speak English, so I, it was a lot of hand gestures, but, if you're patient, you can make a breakthrough, and the thing that I enjoyed most was giving this lady an apple and watching her cut it up and disperse it to her children. (Mark)

> Karl: wherever you go is real India. I mean, we are in India, so (chuckles). We like to, some, some days when we don't have anything to do, we like to just go to places where mostly tourists don't go, as when we went –
> Emma: -Kunnar-

Karl: in Kunnar, when we went to the fishermen there and it was like they'd never seen a tourist before, they it was so happy, they were always so happy to talk to you and you learn a lot-

Emma: and yeah, and they were so polite.

Karl: -- when you meet people in those places, they, they just, --

Emma: -- they can't speak very much English, they can't explain, but you get to see what they do and how they do and how they work and how they get their fishes. And yeah.

Karl: because most of the Indians you meet in the touristy places, they're working when you meet them, and they do their job, but they don't want to talk to you. But when you go to these places and to talk to the people there, it's nice, because they're interested in you and you getta tell them, you a lot of good things, they ask a lot of questions, and they're, they're for real. It's not a tourist thing, they don't answer what the tourist want them to answer. I think that's nice. When I went and do these things, I feel like this real India, I guess.

For Karl, non-commodification collapses upon the desire to be desired: when Karl says "they're interested in you," he captures the aspiration of many travelers to be welcomed into an otherwise inaccessible Indian community. This acceptance represents transcendence of the commodified relations that typically organize relationships between travelers and locals.

SPATIAL CONTRADICTIONS

In spite of the desire of many alternative travelers to spend intimate time with locals, all of the travelers I interviewed stayed in 'backpacking ghettos'[18] – a small area of a given city marked by cheap hotels and restaurants catering to low-budget Western travelers along with stores providing desirable goods such as Western-language novels, toilet paper and clothing and souvenirs of appropriate non-mainstream aesthetic (Richards and Wilson, 2004).

[18] Certainly other travelers were able to avoid these areas, and my interviews.

This self-imposed quarantine to an area with a high concentration of Westerners and Western-influence over the local tourism industry (an arrangement that is not detrimental to local purveyors of travel-related goods and services) appears highly contradictory to the stated goal of meaningful cultural interaction, an irony not overlooked by one of the participants:

> Sometimes I think it's a little bit crazy, er when I, ya, when I was in Chennai and I um, met the other Western people, they were all one week in Chennai and they spent their whole, whole time in one guesthouse and then, this guesthouse is quite nice, it's true, but they have a, special Indian politic [i.e. policy] [...] no Indians, there're no Indians allowed in this guesthouse, that is the reason why all the people are in this guesthouse, so they went to India, and they go to a guesthouse where no Indian people are allowed and sometimes I think it's a little bit crazy. (Julia)

This isolation appears contradictory to the goal of alternative travelers to engage with local people. Yet, it is the manifestation of the implicit division of Indians into a hierarchy of travel-related desirability, an idea elaborated below.

Hottola terms these pockets of isolation "metaspaces" and defines them as "places of recovery; the behavioural and physical tourist 'bubbles' where the locus of control is with the tourists rather than with their so-called hosts" (2005:2). Although this geographical withdrawal is more obvious in resorts with physical barriers preventing locals from accessing the spaces or the guests, Hottola found that alternative travelers in all phases of their trip and of all capacities of intercultural adaptation spent a significant portion of their time in what he perceived as spaces of "Western cultural domination" (2005:3) on account of the significant number of budget accommodations, restaurants oriented to Western clientele (serving, for instance, pizza and Italian food, Mexican food, and organic health food), along with internet and money changing services and shops catering to Western low-budget tastes.

Spaces such as the beach settings of Goa and southern Kerala, which because of their orientation towards the services desired by independent travelers, would certainly qualify as metaspaces. Within these sites, many travelers actively contested the possibilities of authenticity:

> Oh Goa. This is not India for me. 'Cause Goa it's some other land, some exotic land, don't go, I don't think it's, it's the opposite of India.[...] All restaurants, the first thing is the tourism is from all around the world, in the North you see a lot of Israelis, a lot and um and less tourism from around the world. But in Palolem, Goa there's a lot, fifty-fifty I think, Israeli from and tourists from all, tourism from around the world. And, eh, everything expensive and, the food, the food is great but it's restaurant food. They have all kind of food. Pizza or eh, steaks, everything they have. So I don't think Goa is Indian, absolutely. Even the road, the road, the street is very clean and very new. So, that's it. (Raz)

While Raz denied that tourism-laden spaces actually constituted part of India, another traveler articulated many participants' concern and frustration with globalization and the spread of Western ideas and technologies, arguing that an authentic India did exist, but was compromised precisely by the presence of Westerners:

> Of course there is authentic India but you have to travel in your own, on your bike in your jeep something and don't read a book, don't ask people, just go to the places that you won't see any Western people. And many will see the authentic India. People that didn't been touched by the horrible hands of the West. (Daniel)

In contrast to these travelers who debated what, in fact, constituted "the authentic," some participants troubled the assumptions and underpinnings of the concept of authenticity. Also speaking about Goa, Maggie struggled with the very ideas of "authenticity" and "real India" that had been drawn upon by other travelers:

> I don't really know what authentic means I guess. Is it how India has been traditionally, no. I think those areas, those sort of pockets of tourism where, or foreign tourism, more than just tourism because lots of Indians travel, but foreign tourism are not really reflective of traditional or historical India and I think the culture within those pockets has changed. So in that sense is it authentic? Maybe not, but it is real and it's very

> much a part of how India exists today and it's going to shape what happens to India tomorrow. Yeah, I don't know that it's not authentic, I think it's real, but it's not, I'd say it's not reflective of what India has been or how India has come to this point. (Maggie)

In this reflection, Maggie states that Goa's current promotion of international tourism is *not* "how India has been traditionally." In this, her answer remains troubled by India's past – both "what [it] has been" and "how [it] has come to this point." Although she is reluctant to define the term "authenticity" or to invoke it, historical tradition continues to loom largely in her understanding of India as a place. Her struggle with the idea of what Indian "really" is centres on the hegemonic bifurcation of ostensibly authentic culture and the contamination associated with tourism.

Authenticity and Metaspaces

In a search for an India that is pure and uncontaminated by Western influences, independent travelers also seek places outside of any formalized relationships, including economic relations (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003) and formal tourism (Edensor, 1998), as well as historical relations of colonialism. In spaces where there is an overt infrastructure for independent travel, the connections between Western travelers, their currencies, their tastes and the local Indian tourist economy are crassly displayed along the beachfront or alleyways, as are the structural inequalities upon which tourism is based. Metaspaces are thus sites of considerable tension in which the pleasure of familiar comforts can be had in exchange for formal tourist infrastructure and commodification, travel practices that resonate strongly with colonial legacies. Like colonials, travelers participate in lifestyles in which the services provided by Indians (for instance, cleaning, cooking, and transport, alongside growing interest and participation in ayurvedic medicine and spa-type treatments) culminate in a standard of living that travelers could not afford at home

(McCabe, 2005; Azarya, 2004), at the expense of individuals working in poorly paid and uncertain jobs (Nowicka, 2007).

As overtly touristic spaces, metaspaces are points in which processes of globalization – designated by the spread of Western culture, commodification and structural inequalities – are manifested. The ideal of travel to rural villages peopled with picturesque Others in which there is no formalized system of tourism speaks to a denial of the connections that exist between traveler and local, the same denial actively constructed by ethnographers vis-à-vis the people who constitute their 'field' (Amit, 2000). These connections, for both travelers and ethnographers, operate through persisting colonial relations and contemporary globalized economies. Yet, for some travelers, connections are imperative for meaningful cultural interactions. While Mark, quoted above, was happy to sit with a family with whom he could not communicate and watch the mother distribute an apple, Conrad was less certain of the possibilities of off-the-beaten-path travel:

> You could spend your time sitting in a village and people would just be there gawking at you the whole time and not doing what they're actually there for you to see, like, their actual, their life. And you wouldn't know what's happening because you couldn't talk to anybody, you don't know the language, right? So you go either way, go like sit in a village and have like no good time at all and don't actually see what's happening cuz they're too busy staring at your white [i.e. very blond] hair. Or you come to [Varkala]. It's just like that everywhere, though right?

Conrad struggled with the possibilities of travel because of his realization that there is a structure to independent travel that interpellates him as a tourist together with his recognition of the observer effect: his presence prevented him from knowing what locals "actually" do in areas outside of the formalized structure. His frustration turned on the impossibility of being outside of a tourist identity, regardless of the space in which he encountered Indians.

By contrast, Vasu was able to reconcile his tourist identity with conceptions of authenticity because of his acceptance of the broader systems of relations that organized his interactions with local Indians.

> I think it's everywhere, even if you're on a tourist track I think that there's real India there in terms of all the people who are working for that tourist track, you know to keep that whole system going. You know, and working for nothing, I mean that's what constantly shocks me, you know everyday, it's you know, how little people earn here and how they survive on it baffles me. [...] I think a real India can be found, I mean you may not find it in, I mean you find it right here, these [waiters] who are working here, you know, some of these guys are probably the breadwinner for their whole family, you know, so, you can find it, there's no, I don't think it's lost in places that are highly touristed at all. (Vasu)

Vasu's indifference to being hailed as a tourist, along with his awareness of the broader social, political and economic relations that permeated his encounters with Indians, culminated in his refusal of a "real India" that existed beyond his everyday, commodified encounters. To Vasu, unlike many of the other travelers with whom I spoke, the inequalities that inhere in the Indian tourist industry are themselves constitutive of "real India," rather than an indication of contamination.

REAL INDIANS?

In independent travel, Indians are not equally 'real.' In the *Lonely Planet* guidebook to India, for instance, the text implicitly divides Indians into those who provide services to tourists and "picturesque others" (Bhattacharyya,1997:383). These categories of Indians, however, are complicated beyond a simple dichotomy and, taken together, help to explain the spatiality of independent travel. Many travelers are intentionally blind to middle-class Indians who have lifestyles similar to the Western travelers themselves. Although these locals do not frequent the backpacker ghettoes, they are engaged in many of the same practices of travel and tourism as independent Western travelers. They ride in

similar classes of train and attend the same prominent tourist sites. Yet, these Indians are not "picturesque" insomuch as they begin to complicate the boundary of self and other, bringing the exotic into conversation with presumed Western norms of participation in capitalist economies, resulting in parallel middle-class consumption and lifestyles.

One incident in particular highlights the invisibility of middle-class Indians. On a 13-hour train ride, my traveling partner and I shared a berth with two European travelers and an Indian couple, going to the same tourist destination for a week-long holiday. The couple spoke English fluently and were very friendly towards us. During the conversation preceding our interview, one of the Europeans (Hannah) stated that she really wanted to meet and get to know some Indians. She spent the rest of the time on the train talking with us or reading her book, completely ignoring the Indian couple sitting beside her. Clearly, these Indians were not the picturesque Indians with whom she envisioned establishing relationships. The Indians who interested her more, according to her quote above, were the Indians who picked shrimp in the smelly harbour, who didn't speak English, and to whom *she* was exotic.

Here Hannah highlights the dialectical construction of self through Other. She cannot be constituted as a culturally-integrated traveler through relationships with any Indians, but only through those with whom she has a particular colonial relation. This relation is characterized by significant distinctions of class, mobility and cosmopolitanism, such that the possibility of overlap between the Self and Other is mitigated. Object Indians – exoticized not only through racialization and geography, but also through poverty and assumed disjuncture from the West – are not perceived to pose any risks for colonial status that underwrites a traveler identity, in contrast to middle-class, educated, English-speaking Indians.

Sharing in the invisibility of middle-class Indians who pose risks to historical colonial relations, many Indians who work in the tourism sector are also invisible. These workers cook, clean and perform other unskilled duties to support the tourist infrastructure. This unrecognized presence operates in sharp contrast to picturesque Others who are hypervisible. The hypervisible Indians include touts, rickshaw drivers and salespeople who aggressively try to convince Western travelers to use their services or buy their goods, often at rather inflated prices. Such Indians, most travelers agreed, were not 'real' Indians:

> That is a problem, you only get interactions really with the tourist people and the, and the tuktuk drivers. You don't get interactions with the real people. And that's always difficult whenever you're traveling, so quickly, so that's why I said that Punjab was the best cuz I was living with the families and other families and you'd go and trek to another village, 20, 30 hours away.... [In] the tourist industry you don't actually see real people, unless that is the real people. (Hardeep)

As these 'unruly' Indians become metonyms for all Indians working in local tourist economies, the Indians who run guesthouses and restaurants according to their clients' demands for Western physical and service standards become obscured.

Together, middle-class Indians and those who are employed in the tourism industry represent a class of locals that is not 'really' Indian. This un-class provides a justification for the indifferent, rough, sometimes abusive encounters that travelers have with those Indians who challenge the distance between traveler and traveled. The middle-class is suspicious, and sometimes explicitly critiqued as by Gal above, for their integration with a globalized capitalist economy in which they ultimately constitute labour rivals to Western workers in a growing number of sectors (for instance IT and call centres). Consequently, they pose a threat to contemporary employment patterns, modes of consumption and relative standards of living. Tourist employees and entrepreneurs are also marked by their position in the economy, although the economies they share with

independent travelers are far more immediate and they are economies in which many travelers understand themselves to be pitted against workers in the tourist infrastructure.

> I think it's difficult to trust people if they want to get something back. If they, if you're buying something or bargaining over some thing, some price, hotel room, or some travel stuff, I think it's hard to trust people, ah, because I've experienced, um, I trust people and then I don't get what I wanted. Like with the travel agencies they say you get this and this and this and you don't, so I don't want to trust them too much. But like with other people like on the trains and train station, just normal people, it's ok, because they don't, they don't want anything, so it's good to trust them. (Hannah)

> When you have a lot of tourists, then everything changes, people became, become greedy. (Eli)

In the face of confrontational consumption, non-commodification again comes to stand for authentic intimacy. 'Real Indians,' in contrast to those above who are overt, direct participants in globalized economies and who are ultimately competitors within those economies, are imagined to live simple, non-consumerist lives and, significantly, neither demand nor desire anything from the independent travelers with whom they spend time (Maoz, 2006).

> As I got to [Pushkar], it became more of what I was looking for like small village, really friendly people, who talked to me just because they were just interested in like who I was, where I was from and all the rest of it, not just looking at me as though ah here's some money to be made. (Ian)

When the achievement of non-commodification collapses with perceptions of intimacy, "the innocence with which the tourists imagine their travels blinds them to the intrinsic alienation of the locals in these encounters" (Harrison, 2003:137). For instance, even in contexts defined by economic exchange, as in the relationship with taxi drivers and guides, several travelers still sought to redefine the relationship outside of commodification and its consequent hierarchy:

> My best experience was the desert. The guide I had, Mahesh, he was, not, in your face, like any of the other tourist operators here. He was very considerate of my needs and what I wanted in the fact that he sort of, understood that I don't really want Pepsi, I don't really want rugs, and bits and pieces sold to me. I just want my time out there in the desert to be nice and quiet and experience a bit of local culture. So he was good and it was great. (Mark)

> We joke, we laugh, you know we drink whiskey together so yeah I mean obviously there's still a client-driver thing going on, but I've tried as much as possible to break that down, you know, I don't let him call me sir anymore, yeah, it's not on. So I mean he has a sense of duty but it's, it's become a certain form of friendship definitely. (Ian)

While Harrison (2003) clearly addresses the broader social relations that organize the relations between travelers seeking intimacy with exotic others, she does not speak to the ways in which this travelers' desire for innocence can be manipulated. Although Ian argues that the "friendly people" he met in Pushkar were just interested in speaking with him, later conversations indicate that other participants had had similar experiences. Two women approached them and asked them to share conversation over chai, nothing more. Following the conversation, the travelers were invited back to the homes where these women lived with several children and no husbands to support them. Seeing the poverty in which these families were residing, many travelers asked what they could possibly do to help. The women suggested that if their guests bought a bag of chapathi flour, the women and their families would be able to eat for several days.

This constructed scenario is very appealing to many travelers' desire for non-commodification as well as to their desire to be desired. Because of the 'friendship' that had developed, the travelers themselves – as opposed to the women – ultimately proposed the 'gift' of flour, a perception that negated the exchange of goods as a functional consequence of relative privilege. Moreover, by suggesting only the most basic commodity – flour – the women presented themselves as needing only the most basic

necessities and thus eliminated the exchange of money (the presence of which forms the basis of may travelers' discomfort with less insidious forms of begging). However, an Indian friend later elaborated this *relationship, in which the women returned the* flour to the shop where the traveler had bought it. The shopkeeper paid slightly less for the returned bag, thereby making a profit, while the women were free to spend the money as they liked. Thus, the relationship with the traveler was monetarily driven, although concealed in much the same way as the payment of homestays to which Kontogeorgopoulos (2003) refers above. For other independent travelers, commodification was a palimpsest upon which their experiences were inscribed:

> Money rules the world, what they are thinking about? I mean they have nothing and they think we have everything because we can travel, we, we have, the dollars in our pockets, I mean, that's, that's just the deal, when you are tourist, it's always about money. (Sophie)

In contrast to middle-class Indians and to Indians working loudly or quietly in the tourist economy, 'real Indians' are implicitly understood to live a spiritual life of non-accumulation. This orientation marks a major difference from the West, the "corollary being that their culture and religious beliefs somehow inure them to suffering, which is a particularly popular belief among travelers in India" (O'Reilly, 2006:1003), a claim supported by some of the travelers I spoke with:

> This way of behaving, this, you know what, this really shocked, this way of they living they don't want to make money, don't want to like, they don't look to be rich, don't, don't chasing nothing. I can see, I, I took, today I sat and I saw, today was, no yesterday, I saw a person just sitting on the temple, in the temple, doing nothing, looking at tree, I probably got mad if I do it. Just sat there. (Gal)

> The biggest thing is, the strength of human nature, how they keep going. If you go to like some of those absolute sewer places where people livin', they're smiling, I don't know what gives them the will to carry on to the next day. (Hardeep)

> We want to make more of life, we want to get more money, we want to be, build a bigger house or we want to have our family, we want to buy rich and they don't care about that because what matters is not the material things, it's the soul, it's the way it goes on and on and in the next life, maybe it will be better but this life, this is how I was born and this is how I going to, going to die. So they don't have this race after life, have to be, have to be having more. (Rina)

This emphasis on spiritual non-accumulation serves not only to mitigate the structural inequalities that lead some people to travel independently while other people live on sidewalks, but also reinforces an implicit essential difference between the West (as understood through the commonalities of travelers' experiences in their home countries) and India: while Westerners are consumed with consumption, a pastime of which many travelers were critical, Indians are spiritual and pre-consumptive. However, this assumption about who Indians really are was not shared by all participants and was actively refuted by a handful of participants:

> I guess they're trying to say they want to find rural India, I don't know, maybe that's what they mean. But they, this whole idea of authenticity and saying that only if you like live in a hut and like get your water from a well every day not from a tap, then you're like a real Indian, which is such crap, because like India, there are Indians in all sorts of experiences and that they're all valid. (Leah)

Although Leah has a critical perspective on how India and Indians are constructed in discourses of alternative travel, the discourse of difference was dominant, likely because it is essential to independent travel: through this difference the cultural Other is reproduced and cultural capital is attributed to independent travel. Moreover, through the construction of essential cultural differences – achieved through wilful blindness to those who violate the differences, as noted above – the West is reproduced as 'developed', relative to the 'developing' world, and the liberal capitalist norm of entrepreneurialism culminates in the self-made man (Furniss, 1998) persists.

These neo-colonial constructions of India as a travel destination that is exotic and super-sensory speaks back to a perceived dullness, if not absence, of culture and of landscape in Western nations.

> Totally different from [my country] and uh, it's nice to see new culture, which [my country] doesn't have at all, culture really, so it's nice to see the extreme history and the um, uh I don't know just the bizarre, I guess in India. You hear stories about from other travelers and [...] bizarre, the landscape, the mountains, in like Hampi, the rocks, the, the people, the beggars, the, the rickshaw drivers like everything is just totally new to me, right, so, bizarre. I don't know, there's always something happening that just totally blows my mind. I'm going to go home to [my country] and it's going to be like staring at a blank wall, it's so boring compared to this. And uh, I don't know, just the new, everything's new, everything's different. New trees, people. Everybody stares at you, everybody uh, I don't know, it's just being a minority is, it's kind of different for me I guess, I haven't really experienced that yet. So ya. That's bizarre about it. (Conrad)

Although his reading of difference was directed towards India, it was also explicitly about his home country. Through his statement, Conrad's country was cast as "boring," acultural and predominantly 'non-racialized' – given the explicit recognition of his whiteness for the first time in India. It was against this blank national canvas that India appears "bizarre" and mind-blowing.

Yet Conrad also worried that the "bizarre" that he sought might not actually exist, perhaps because of the contamination of globalization and of travel itself. Although travel to developing areas continues to become easier and more accessible, this ease itself challenges travelers' claims to road status. While O'Reilly argues that "for today's backpackers, it is no less of an adventure and no less potentially fulfilling than it was 20 years ago" (2006:1006), many of the travelers I spoke with, including Conrad, felt that their travel experiences were compromised by other travelers and a general lack of authenticity in India.

> There's this book, *Bone Man of Benares*, he talks about all these things, it seems like, I think it's supposed to be a real story, but talks about how he goes to all these places and sees these things, these bizarre things like going to the Ganges and smoking up with like sadhus and like doing all this stuff that everybody thinks is gonna happen and uh, it's funny, because you know it's all these full expectations of doing stuff, doing crazy stuff like that and then you get here and it's just like, not even close. It's just so, everything seems so influenced from like Western dollar, like this place [i.e. Varkala] [...]. It messed up my whole experience. Thinking I was going to come and see that, that whole, uh, crazy side of India, like guys rolling up, like hanging rocks from their penises and stuff, like bizarre things like that and it's just, doesn't probably, I don't know if it doesn't happen anymore, or if you have to get off this tourist trail. (Conrad)

AUTHENTICITY AND LIBERALISM

In allegedly authentic constructions, India refuses Western cultural norms, including an adherence to liberal rationality. This rejection of rationality is manifested more directly in the language of many participants who referred to the "chaos" of India:

> They [i.e. other people who are experiencing culture shock] are it shocked for the food and for the the Indian people and from the smells and everything they like when you landing, you're landing on the city, and Indian city is tough because all those people in cars and traffic and everybody again to everybody and you just, you cannot find yourself in this, in this oh, uh [...] in this whole mess, chaotic mess. (Daniel)

> [Delhi] was just chaotic and, uh, and it just didn't feel to me like a capital. It was really, you know, crowded and lot of, lots of dirt and there were, the streets were just mud streets and lots and lots of people and cows and rickshaws and so, I didn't see any, I just saw chaos, I didn't see any, anything was planned or that, it was just there. (Anton)

> [Varanasi] was like a big mess. It was a bit of everything, it was people and cows in the streets and beggars and poverty and bridged together Indian tourists that you can see with] a lot of gold on them and the Ganga, which is the holy river and they go and wash in it and next to it all the dirt spills in, and they burn the bodies and the buffaloes goes in the lake and it was like a bit of everything and this is how I imagined India, so for me it was, I was two months up north, but it wasn't what I was looking for. I was looking for that, I was looking for the whole mess... I felt it's [i.e. the north] not the real India I was looking to see. It's not the real culture, it was very quiet places, nice atmosphere, nice views, but it was not, it was not India, it was not people spitting the, this

> tobacco they're chewing and the cows in the street and the rickshaws and the bicycles and the chaos. I was looking for the chaos, this is what I wanted to see and the north is very very quiet it's not like that. (Rina)

The circle of liberalism closes. The practices of individual independent travelers are consistent with the tenets of individuality, self-development and the meritocratic building of (cultural) capital. Independent travel itself is understood as the actualization of the celebration of diversity. Simultaneously, India and Indians are constructed as external to and undesiring of the liberalism that pervades Western social, political and economic thought. The Indians that are readily received are those who reject, at least superficially, capitalist consumption[19] and live their lives in a spiritual, rather than rational, manner. Similarly India itself, as the synergetic outcome of all that transpires within its borders, is understood in terms of chaos and poverty, qualities that many travelers read as both causative of and indicative of a lack of liberalism.

Where India adheres to rational and Western aesthetics, it is rejected by independent travelers as formalized tourism that has been contaminated by liberalism. Indians who participate in liberal capitalism as part of a global middle-class or those who are utilitarian in their commodified relationships with tourists are also rejected as a means to reproduce elusive colonial distinctions between those who travel and those who are traveled.

Yet these cultural spaces also provide sights/sites in which tourism can be inverted. On a trekking tour of the northern hills in Thailand, Palmer recalls a musical event held for the trekkers in which the village headman retrieved and played a piece of pale blue PVC pipe:

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[19] C.B. MacPherson (1975) elaborates the junctures between liberal philosophy and capitalism.

> Our uncertainty as to the 'authenticity' of the instrument soon evaporated into embarrassment as in full view of a sizeable and amused Lisu crowd, the headman proceeded to teach (to the tune of the pipe) the three of us a Lisu dance that we managed to turn into a clumsy shuffle. (1998:79)

In their article on the political possibilities of Indigenous tourist sites in southern Alberta, Deutschlander and Miller (2003) found that the legacies of colonialism were clearly articulated by Indigenous guides and on displays. In such cultural spaces, as a contrast to designated political spaces, these critical political perspectives were relatively openly received by non-Indigenous people. Not only do these actions challenge assumptions about cultural consumption, they also refuse the boundaries between Self and Other that support cultural travel by highlighting the interconnections between themselves and the travelers. These examples suggest that the ideal of 'culture' – travelers' and tourists' commitment to cultural relativity and the fetishization of the cultural Other – sometimes garners reverence such that locals can explicitly exert subjectivity and challenge hegemonic colonial relations.

Concluding Remarks

In spite of Urry's (2003) announcement of the arrival of the "post-tourist" who actively engages the irony and performativity of her tourism, the independent travelers with whom I spoke were deeply invested in, though often conflicted by, representing their experience as non-touristic. Not only were travelers themselves opposed to being tourists (Chapter 3), but they actively constructed the Indians they encountered in order to reproduce particular representations that circulate in Western imaginaries of India. In disregarding middle-class Indians, while actively seeking poor, presumably uneducated, and frequently rural Indians, travelers constructed an idealized Indian that hearkens back to the primitive colonial Other necessary for relations of exclusion and inequality. This

invisibility of middle-class and wealthy Indians not only reproduces India as a fallen society (Azarya, 2004), but also removes those with whom the traveler shares something of a common experience as a middle-class global citizen, a reproduction that buttresses the Otherness of the Other.

Moreover, the technique of avoiding educated middle-class Indians makes it unlikely that travelers will encounter Indians who are critical of travelers' transnational mobilities and their decisions to use India in order to find themselves, as many social critics, including overt anti-colonialists, have hailed, and continue to hail, from this class (see, for instance, Fanon, 1963; Biko, 1986; Said, 1979). Thus, in addition to the apolitical romanticization of a 'primitive' Indian that denies the historical colonial context of the social, political and economic differences between traveler and traveled, independent travelers' innocence is further buttressed by actively constructing 'real' Indians as those with whom in-depth communication is unlikely at best, thereby removing themselves from the possibilities of critical conversation.

V. Sexualized Violence, Racialized Heteronormativity and Patriarchal Colonialism[20]

Independent travelers head to India in search of a variety of experiences, including personal growth (Noy, 2004), engagement with another culture (Harrison, 2003), and unabashed hedonism (Diken and Lausten, 2004). Yet in travel to the Third World, travel that is predicated on a cultural Other, these experiences are often marked by violence. This violence includes actual physical assaults, as well as the threat of such assaults (Williams, 1983). This threat is manifested not only through the possibility of physical assaults, but also through travelers' perceptions of the unruly (Williams, 1983), unpredictable character of primitive Others (McClintock, 1995; Said, 1979; Fanon, 1967), perceptions that recall discourses of colonialism. The sexual harassment of Western women by Indian men is the predominant form of violence described by independent travelers. In addition to the groping frequently experienced by white women in particular – physical assaults – this violence is also manifested through many Indian men's persistent stares, which carry the threat of assaults.[21] Thus, this violence is both experienced and expected.

This form of violence co-exists with retaliatory violence that is sometimes meted out to Indian men who sexually harass Western women, a violence that seriously troubles travelers' constructions of innocence. Though this aggression does not mark the day to

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[20] A version of this chapter has been accepted for publication. Lozanski forthcoming. *Tourist Studies*.

[21] Although violent sexual assault does occur, it is uncommon and severely sanctioned. For instance, in two separate incidents in which German travelers in Rajasthan were raped, their assaulters were sentenced to jail time within 1 month of the assault (The Tribune, Chandigarh, 02 June 2005; The CalcuttaTelegraph, 13 April 2006). This expediency is in considerable contrast to the bureaucracy that marks sexual assaults of Indian women. There are obvious parallels here to the quick death sentence death handed down to two Thai men within weeks of the rape and murder of an English woman vacationing in Ko Samui (The Guardian, 18 January 2006), an active decision by the Thai government to set an international precedent against violent crime against tourists, women in particular.

day experiences of most travelers, sexual harassment does. The tension between these co-existing forms of violence is a productive place from which to deconstruct gendered and racialized interactions between travelers and Indians.

My project in this chapter is to critically unpack the ways that sexual harassment and retaliatory violence constitute – and are constituted by – the racist, misogynist, and colonial discourses within which independent travel is embedded. I begin with a preliminary sketch of travelers' readings of Western women and Indian men as complicit in the sexual harassment and assault of Western women through their inappropriate behaviours. In these instances, Indian men are perceived to be hypersexed, while women travelers are seen to act without regard for their safety. After mapping out this framework, I introduce two incidents of retaliatory violence committed against Indian men who had sexually harassed Western women travelers. Although these acts appear to represent the clash between Western feminism and Indian colonial subversion, I highlight the ways in which they ultimately work together to affirm a white patriarchal colonialism. I also draw attention to the presence of Indian women as they figure in assumptions about Western women's liberation and Indian men's sexuality.

To frame this deconstruction, I draw upon psychoanalysis and Foucauldian conceptions of power to refuse the exclusive antagonism of gender and racialization (i.e. Western women vs. Indian men) in the context of sexualized violence. At first reading, the sexual harassment of women travelers operates through the tension between the Western feminist demand that women can move through colonial settings without being harassed and the challenge to colonial status asserted by Indian men who make a masculine claim to Western women: Western women and Indian men seek power in a colonial patriarchy at the other's expense. My intention, however, is to move beyond this superficial analysis and

complicate the racialized and gendered neo-colonial relations, as well as the construction of innocence necessary to independent travel as an alternative mode of tourism. The power moves of Indian men and Western women obscure and reproduce a Western, implicitly white, colonial patriarchy in which both Western women and Indian men continue to be marginalized.

'Equal' Western Women

In addition to the liberal tenets of individualism and freedom that underwrite the mobilities of individual travelers (Chapter 3), liberalism also operates through the principle of equality. Against a stereotypical backdrop of subjugated Indian women, independent travel provides a means through which middle-class Western women traveling in India can exercise their equality.

Western women traveling far from home are characterized as independent in their home countries, by their fellow travelers, and by those living in the places they travel. While Indian women are perceived to be governed by their fathers and brothers, Western women are assumed and expected to be independent, equal, and liberated. In this sense, Indian women are foils for the liberal accomplishments of Western women (Burton, 1992) mapped onto women independent travelers. Because of their ostensibly inferior status vis-à-vis Indian men, Indian women stand in contraposition to all that Western feminism has accomplished. The following quote from a traveler highlights the relationships Indian women are assumed to have with their male kin and, at the same time, constructs the speaker as free by pointing to her exemption from these relations:

> We're used to, like I am going without sleeves, and it's, that's what I am used to and nobody stares at me in [my country] [...], I ask this local boy why, why are everybody staring at us and, and not in a nice way. So he said that if they are going to stare at an Indian woman so her brother or

> her father will hit him or kill him whatever. And if they are staring at you, so you they know you are Western. You're more open minded so you don't mind they're staring at you (Sara).

In this quote, the traveler draws on a local's construction of Indian women – presented as objects of the 'traditional', 'primitive' protection by their male family members – to highlight her freedom to travel alone and to dress as she likes.

Western women are equal to men not only in their construction vis-à-vis Indian women, but also through their similarities with Western men as they participate in an activity infused with masculinity. The practice of travel from Western countries has been steeped in masculine and heterosexist imagery from early travel writings describing the penetration of feminized landscapes by early men travelers (McClintock, 1995). Contemporary forms of travel remain infused with masculinity. Advertisements echo this heteronormative and misogynist history (McClintock, 1995). These narratives construct exploration and travel as innocent, rather than lascivious, because it is accepted (if not desired) by the people and the landscape:

> India awaits you... The timeless mystery and beauty of India has been waiting for you for 5000 years. She is an indescribable and unforgettable land and only by visiting the country can the truth be experienced... Everything you desire can be found in India... every whim will be gratified. (Government of India Tourist Office, 1995, cited in Pritchard and Morgan, 2000)

The practices that take place in foreign spaces are also constructed as the domain of men: whereas men are active explorers of new environments, women are assumed to be more passive in their participation (Blunt, 1994) because of the potential dangers they may encounter. In particular, the off-the-beaten-track motivation of independent travel leads travelers to embrace a masculinist risk in order to achieve 'authentic' experiences of the country (Gogia, 2006). These risks are due, several participants explained, to the

principle of direct cultural engagement and its refusal of cultural mediators such as guides, organized texts (excluding the *Lonely Planet*), and enclavic tourist sites, which, together, are assumed to provide safety and security to mass tourists.

In taking on these masculinist risks, Western women independent travelers increasingly challenge the boundaries between masculinity and femininity. As these boundaries are blurred by women independent travelers, they are simultaneously restored by increased invigilance of these women's actions. For instance, formal travel guides imply that Western women bear the responsibility of preventing sexual harassment. It is assumed that by moderating their dress and their behaviour, women can avoid most sexual harassment. This directive is explicit in the *Lonely Planet*, a guidebook carried by many independent travelers regardless of their nationality: "Close attention to standards of dress will go a long way to minimising problems for female travelers" (Finlay *et al.*1996:141-142), and "Warding off sexual harassment is often a matter of common sense and culturally appropriate behaviour. What you wear can help" (Singh *et al.* 2003:120-121). This surveillance contrasts innocent femininity with women travelers' potential behaviour.

Independent travelers of both genders espoused this focus on Western women's behaviour as a means to prevent sexual harassment. Women's dress was commonly discussed as a way to avoid sexual harassment. Yet the rationale used to explain the importance of conservative dress was often couched in terms of cultural sensitivity. When I asked travelers to give me examples of culturally disrespectful travel behaviour, women's dress was a source of commentary for almost every traveler with whom I spoke, while only one mentioned men's dress.

> I just wanna behave in a good way and respect everybody's customs, so I, I'm representing foreigners or tourists in this country.[...] Maybe people aren't, maybe, doing it for purpose but, uh, maybe some travelers aren't aware that they can't, can't wear, you know, maybe their clothes, they can't wear skirts or reveal their skin that much or something like that because they just, maybe they can't know it, or don't know it. (Anton)

> An irresponsible tourist might be a woman walking around in short shorts and a tank top, where most of the people aren't doing that. I don't think that's very responsible because I don't think it's very respectful. (Maggie)

These comments reflect a clear gendering of cultural sensitivity. In particular, travelers were concerned with the inappropriateness of dressing in tank tops and short skirts, which, based on my observations, was uncommon outside of beach resorts.[22]

The 'inappropriate' behaviour of women travelers is also established through a subtle critique of their refusal to conform to normative gender mobilities. Travel practices that take place in foreign spaces are constructed as the domain of men: a construction of particular importance to independent travelers because of their motivation to get away from other tourists (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003) and ideally 'discover' places where their whiteness is novel (O'Reilly, 2006). The expected passivity of women travelers in their consumption of such spaces (Blunt, 1994) is due to the many potential dangers women may encounter that culminate in a backdrop of fear for women travelers.

As a practice, independent travel emphasizes masculinist risk (Gogia, 2006) and makes this risk accessible to its women participants. At the same time, however, women who do participate in independent travel are subjected to a sweeping narrative of vulnerability as well as heightened scrutiny to explain their negative encounters. Ahmed

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[22] The absence of this very pointed universal marker reveals a major disjuncture between what woman travelers can empirically be seen to be doing and what they are constructed or imagined to be doing. This disjuncture is a manifestation of the fragility of subject positions and their need for ongoing iteration (Davies, 2000; Blunt, 1994).

connects fear to differential mobilities, arguing that "women's access to public space is restricted by the circulation of narratives of feminine vulnerability" (2004:69). She continues:

> Fear of 'the world' as the scene of a future injury works as a form of violence in the present, which shrinks bodies in a state of afraidness, a shrinkage which may involve a refusal to leave the enclosed spaces of home, or refusal to inhabit what is outside in ways that anticipate injury (walking alone, walking at night and so on). ... It is the regulation of bodies in space through the uneven distribution of fear which allows spaces to become territories, claimed as rights by some bodies and not others. (Ahmed, 2004:70)

This constraint is exacerbated for women travelers given the gendered spatialization of highly masculinized practices of travel in general (Diken and Lausten, 2004; Enloe, 2000; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000) and of independent travel in particular (Gogia 2006). At the same time that they possess mobility enabled by their classed, racialized, and nationed subject positions (Gogia, 2006), women travelers to India violate the gendered constraints of their mobility through their overseas ventures.

Women's solo travel was understood to be particularly problematic when it happened at night. In its general section on safety, the *Lonely Planet* singles out women, suggesting that "in all parts of India (as elsewhere in the world) women should avoid walking alone in the streets late at night" (Singh *et al.*, 2003:125). While a couple of men (Simon and Anton) commented that they didn't move around at night because they were unsure about their safety, most of the concerns about night time dangers were gendered and tied into discourses of safety, regardless of location:

> No problems whatsoever. I've walked around Mumbai in the middle of the night, nobody's bothered me. [...] Even Delhi, ya, I felt incredibly safe, that's cuz I suppose I'm a man and I'm a, a, I'm of Asian origin anyway. All the men I've spoken to never had any problems, but the women have quite a few problems (laughing a little bit), mainly it's of a sexual nature. (Hardeep)

> Me being a woman doesn't help [laughs]. It's, ah, in many, in many ah, ah... how do you say, there are many things I can't do because like traveling alone in a night bus or, or going, I wouldn't after dark, going alone in the city. (Sara)

In the absence of a formalized relationship to a man, such as a brother or marital partner – relationships that are seen to define Indian women – Western women are encouraged, and choose, to lie about involvement in such relationships choosing marriage, in particular, as a means to mark themselves as unavailable. This declaration of unavailability is necessary to overcome the normative status of availability assigned to women travelling without a man. It is only through formalized possession by a man that a woman is able to claim her unavailability to other men, especially Indian men.

> I let [my boyfriend] tell people that we were married just because I was afraid of stuff like that too [responding to a story about the guide who tried to kiss his clients], you know. So every time I walk along the beach people are like 'How's your husband?' I'm like 'What?' Oh [laughs]! Good, ok, I guess. (Shannel)

This relationship to Western men has become institutionalized in the formal travel culture of guidebooks. In the section for women travelers in the *Lonely Planet* guide to India, the authors suggest – and in so doing reiterate – the need for Western women travelers to formally align themselves with men in order to avoid harassment:

> Some women prepare in advance by wearing a pseudo wedding ring, or by announcing early on in the conversation that they are married or engaged (regardless of whether they are or not). For many, this has proved effective in keeping interactions 'lust-free.' (Singh *et al.*, 2003:121)

These statements tie directly into Ahmed's (2004) analysis of fear insomuch as they decrease women's mobility unless alliances with more powerful actors – that is, Western men – are sought. Women travelling without a man, and especially those travelling alone,

were sanctioned because of the ways in which such travel was deemed to be unnecessarily risky in implicitly masculinized foreign spaces.

While the proposition that Western women travelers should travel with men is articulated through the protection that Western men offer, this heteronormative stipulation is itself a colonial legacy informed by discourses such as the "Black Peril": the threat of black men to white women in Kenya and southern Rhodesia in the 1920s and 1930s (Stoler, 2002). In these formally colonized spaces, racial clarification was mapped onto the bodies of European women, although there was no evidence of sexual assault or rape, or attempts at such, by native men (Stoler, 2002). By emphasizing the desire of native men for European women and by policing both native men and European women to prevent any sexual encounters, European men and the colonial states were participating in more subtle responses to:

> ... Perceived threats to European prestige, increased racial conflict, covert challenges to colonial politics, outright expressions of nationalist resistance, and internal dissension among whites themselves (Stoler, 2002:57).

Thus, European women were metonyms for colonial culture (McClintock, 1995). As those predominantly privileged by colonial arrangements, many European men had a considerable interest in controlling not just European women's sexuality, but the colonial regime as a whole. In this way, European women were possessed by European men (Stoler, 2002), the latter deemed protectors of the colonial culture (McClintock, 1995). Western women independent travelers are similarly haunted by the inconspicuous possession of Western women by Western men. As European women were possessed as part of the project of formal colonialism, women travelers are possessed as part of the project of independent travel. Their 'possession' is dependent upon discourses of safety

(and lack thereof) and vulnerability for Western women, discourses reproduced by both men and women travelers.

> I've been happy to travel on my own. I think women, women are seen, obviously seen quite differently in this society. Men are seen as dominant, females seen as sort of inferior and I think they project that image onto Western females. And I have had female friends who have been groped and been hassled, being taken advantage of, um, I think it is definitely a bit more dangerous for females. Um, unless you're traveling with a man or unless another female.[23] Yeah, I think that would be the main thing. I'm glad I'm a male traveling. Yeah. Yeah, because it just gives me the time to, it gives me the chance to do what I want where I want and not feel too worried about things. (Nigel)

> Ya, I mean, I don't know, I, I kind of felt like my friend really wanted to come with me here, and I wanted to bring her but at the same time I thought 'I'm not traveling through India without a man, I don't think so.' So I brought [my boyfriend] with me, you know? (Shannel)

This fear – which contrasts men travelers' purported confidence – acts on women not only to limit their mobility, but also to steep the mobility that is accessible to them in a double-edged sword of blame and responsibility:

> Women's access to public space is restricted by the circulation of narratives of feminine vulnerability. Such narratives are calls for action: they suggest women must always be on guard when outside the home [...] So women, if they are to have access to feminine respectability, must either stay at home (femininity as domestication), or be careful in how they move and appear in public (femininity as constrained mobility). Safety here becomes a question of not inhabiting public space or, more accurately, of not moving through that space alone [...] the mobility of some bodies involves or even requires the restriction of the mobility of others. (Ahmed, 2004:69-70)

Although groping as a form of sexual violence, narratives of safety in travel, and assumptions about women's constrained mobilities speak to a tension between Western women and Indian men, they obscure the sexualization of Western women that haunts

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[23] Some men travelers, after pointing out that it was unsafe for women to travel alone and that they are better off traveling with men, quickly followed that comment up with "or another woman." Several times I found myself wondering whether they were including that caveat for my benefit, so as not to offend me as a woman travelling with another woman.

relationships between Western men and Western (white) women. While Indian women are assumed to be overtly bound to their male kin, Western women are bound to Western men, albeit in more obscured ways. As travelers in India, Western women are influenced by patriarchal relationships much like those that are understood to fix the subject position of the Indian woman in formalized relationships with Indian men. This influence is manifested through discourses of safety in foreign spaces, along with the sexual objectification that operates at beaches, as the following interview excerpt illustrates:

> I was traveling with two women from Austria and we were at the beach a little north, Kunnar, and you know, it's a very quiet beach, you know, there was nobody besides us and it was on a cliff you know about as high as that, we were down on the beach, and then I started looking up, I was like, quite an audience up there actually, you know, because these women were in bikinis and the [Indian] guys would come down and I realized there was this whole ritual about the proximity of me to these women changed how the men reacted, and acted and it was like, I realized what a sort of role, you know I was playing. If I was far away then the guys would be up close to the women, if I was near, or when I came back, they would all step back... (Vasu)

This obligatory alliance with Western men is contradictory insomuch as the formation of such (intimate or platonic) partnerships mirrors Indian women's ostensibly mandatory relations with Indian men,[24] the relations that are refused by Westerners because they are understood as manifestations of Indian women's lack of liberation.

Women traveling alone or with other women (i.e. women who travel without men) are reminded before they leave and throughout their travels that their unaccompanied presence in foreign spaces is risky (read: violating acceptable behaviour for women) so

[24] Though I did not raise this specific issue during my interviews, it has come up several times when I have presented my work at academic forums. The most overt assertion of this assumption occurred at Congress 2007, when one of the audience members suggested that Indian women did not experience sexual harassment because they were always escorted by either fathers or brothers.

that should anything arise, they have been warned and are thus accountable for their actions and responsible for the consequences. Women traveling alone are not innocent.

'Unruly' Indian Men

While Western women are understood to be equal to Western men – even if this equality is not practiced – Indian men are not afforded similar superficial equality. Indian men are seen to control the women in their family *and* act in inappropriate ways towards Western women travelers. This behaviour, generalized from a minority of men to the entire male Indian population, is seen as evidence that they have not accepted the liberal doctrine that marks Western society as 'developed.' Obversely, according to an ethnocentric Western perspective, this lack of modern liberalism marks individual Indian men, Indian men as a collective, and India as a whole as 'undeveloped' or 'primitive.' Simon's portrayal of his hired driver emphasizes the driver's inappropriate behaviour and his insufficiently developed judgment and intellect:

> The whole fact is that every time we pass the women [labouring alongside the roads], or we do pass the women in the car, he beeps the horn and shouts profanities at them you know? [...] And a, he's saying to me that he doesn't want his wife to work like that because he doesn't want men to, act like that towards them. So I said to him, 'Well why do you do it if you wouldn't like your wife to be spoken to like that or leered at like that?' And, he he basically [laughing] couldn't comment. And he seemed a little embarrassed, you know. But that's the mentality. (Simon)

Simon criticizes his Indian driver both for being sexist and for failing to see all individuals as equal, a basic tenet of Western hegemonic liberalism. Because of this "mentality," Indian men are incapable of seeing women as equals and of controlling their urges; they are destined for the subjugated status of the colonized, perpetuating the need for colonial intervention and reproducing the privilege of Western men as enlightened colonizers.

Simon's reading of all Indian men as chauvinists (based on the actions of his driver) provides yet another vector through which Indians are constructed as Other (Chapter 4).

In addition to being understood as inferior because of their failure to recognize women as equal persons, Indian men are also chastised because of their hypersexuality. The harassment of Western women is assumed to derive from an involuntary response to desire, an assumption that implies that Indian men are driven by baser instincts for pleasure triggered by the sight of liberated Western women. Indian men are frequently perceived as out of control of their sexuality and unable to control their sexual desires, an inability that culminates in their propensity to stare at and grope Western women:

> There was one time, in up North [in Karnataka] again where I was like, I went into a restaurant by myself and I just like I was hungry and just wanted to eat and and I was expecting like yeah there were going to be men there and they were going to stare and I was like, whatever I needed to eat something, but it was so I mean it was just so shameless and blatant. (Susan)

Simon, quoted above, went on to conclude, "They are just raging perverts basically."

This hypersexualization turns, in part, on the assumed inability of Indian men to differentiate between the sexualized fantasy of (liberated) women depicted in advertising and on television, for example, and the reality of a Western woman travelling through India.

> Foreign women travelling in India have always been viewed by Indian men as free and easy, based largely on what they believed to be true from watching cheap Western soapies. Women have been hassled, stared at, spied on in hotel rooms, and often groped, although the situation was rarely threatening. Recently, however, the situation has become more difficult for women travellers, mainly because the 'sexual revolution' which swept the West 25 years ago has now hit India. [...] The message getting through to the middle-class Indian is that sex before and outside of marriage is less of a taboo than in the past, and so foreign women are seen as even more free and easy than ever before. (Finlay *et al.* in the *Lonely Planet*, 1996:141-142)

> Two days ago I was in Ooty and I had to take the local bus to my [hostel] there and it was a really a very full bus and I stand at the front of the [bus]. And many people stood on my bag, and somebody, touched me between my legs, and all of a sudden, so I turn around and I shouted 'Who did that?' And everybody looked at me and wondered what the matter, and then I told the Indian people what, what did going on, and then a man said 'Ok, come on, you can sit down here. It's better for you.' So after that it was ok, but, ya, sometimes it's very difficult as a woman alone. Because they have some prejudices or some imagination, association with Western women that we are all have sex a lot so... [laughs]. (Julia)

The inability to distinguish between Western women travelers and the sexualized subject position of the Western woman was understood by some participants to result from inappropriate or inadequate socialization with women, culminating in Indian men who are awkwardly adolescent in their sexuality and their judgment of appropriate behaviour with women.

> I saw the women getting out of the water and then they were back up at the place we were staying really quick. I was like 'What happened?' They were like 'These guys came in the water, they started saying this and that, took off their clothes.' So I was like, you know, so I was like, so that was, yeah, frustrating, but I was you know, sort of made me think a lot about Indian customs and you know made me think about a lot of things like the whole arranged marriage situation and how the sexes are kind of kept apart and if you go out in the streets it's all men right now, you know that, right? And how, so this socializing between men and women is very minimal, you know, it's in very, it's in certain ways, it's not you know in public much and so the guys basically don't know how to socialize with women until you know, recently. (Vasu)

> I think it's, no one's fault because many Indian boy they didn't know it better and ah, in fact, ya, especially in rural area, Indian woman they don't see a lot of things a rural Indian woman they see only, heels and the ankles and some of the arms and the face. (Julia)

In critiquing Indian cultural practices of arranged marriage and modest dress, these travelers implicitly recall the liberation of Western women and insinuate that more flexible norms of dress and heterosexual companionship (read: heteronormativity) correspond with

greater sexual maturity for Western men, while Indian men are not properly socialized to (Western practices of) sexuality.

Yet this hypersexualization is complicated by a simultaneous emasculation. In the context of travel, Pritchard and Morgan (2000) suggest that "by constructing what is 'Other' as feminine and often child-like, tourism discourses are affirming existing inequalities between nations, genders, races and sexes" (p.132). Indian men are constructed through discourses of violence and femininity as beatable (Marcus, 1992). They are not only beatable by Western men, but also by Western women as well as:

> I'm like a head taller than most of the men here [laughs], and I'm short for an American woman, but I'm a head taller than most of the men here. So I feel like I can kick anyone's ass [both laughing]. Ah... I can't believe I just said that [both laugh] (Shannel)

> I'm bigger than most Indian men, so I walk around confidently – maybe sometimes overconfident – that if someone touches me I can beat their ass. I think this scares people off. (Leah)

This intersection of racialization and gendering stabilizes the identity of an effeminate South Asian male (Sinha, 1995), simultaneously reproducing the unmarked normativity of Western masculinities. The remarks by Leah and Shannel suggest that the beatability of Indian men is not a quality imposed upon particular Indian men when they have challenged the colonial status quo by groping a Western woman, but is quality imposed upon all Indian men at all times by both Western men and Western women.

Thus, Indian men are emasculated at the same time that they are hypersexualized. Although this hypersexualization appears contradictory to their emasculation, these qualities are mutually reinforcing insomuch as the masculinity against which they are evaluated is one of Western civility. In the 19th century "the British demonstrated the Bengali's lack of 'manly self-control' in their argument about the

excessive sexual indulgence of the Bengali male" (Sinha, 1995:18-19). Similarly, the hypersexualization of Indian men who sexually harass Western women breaches such Western masculine control and is evidence not of their manhood, but rather of their lack of sexual control and thus their sexual immaturity.

As a practice, sexual harassment committed against Western women subordinates not only these women but also Indian men. Acts of sexual harassment appear to challenge the emasculation assigned to Asian men (Malam, 2004; Eng, 2001) who, it may be argued, are staking a claim to power within a neo-colonial structure at the expense of Western women. Yet the sexual harassment of women travelers represents a continued emasculation of Indian men, as their masculinity continues to be cast as uncivilized in contrast to hegemonic Western masculinity along with the use of physical violence to re-establish colonial hierarchies. Thus, the sexual harassment of Western women travelers by Indian men is significant in the reproduction of Western patriarchy.

Two Tales of Retaliatory Violence

White women travelers are frequently sexually harassed by some Indian men who stare, make lewd comments, or grope body parts. Many of the women I interviewed had been groped and almost every woman had been stared at in a way that made her uncomfortable. This empirical experience frames the travel narratives of many women and many men. The harassment of women travelers was also taken up apologetically by many Indian men I met and with whom I had conversations during my travels. This predominant discourse of sexual harassment/sexual violence as something that is done *by* Indian men *to* Western women obscures the ways in which the colonial locations of Western women and Indian men are co-constructed, as well as the more complex matrix within which

Indian men and white women, as individuals, act. It eclipses several supporting practices of the racialized heteronormativity assumed between Western men and women, the differential constraints of gendered mobilities, the threat posed to Western masculinity by Indian men, and the fixing of Indian women as cultural artefacts.

In the two travel stories that follow, it is possible to begin to unravel multiple conflicting discourses and practices of gendering, racialization, sexualisation, and violence in a neo-colonial contact zone (Pratt, 1992) between independent Western travelers and Indians. Although fear operates as an overt discourse of sexual violence toward white women by Indian men, there are more complicated gendered and racialized relationships through which other forms of violence are enacted.

> Tale 1: Gujurati beach
> The women in the group were wearing bikinis and while the women were in the water, a group of middle-aged Indian men began approaching them and taunting them with comments like "nice tits." At some point, one of the men in the travelers' group decided to intervene. He grabbed the Indian ringleader and dragged him out of the water. On the beach, the traveler turned the Indian man around to face everyone on the beach and then pulled his pants down, saying "everyone look at his penis and laugh. Now you know what it feels like to be objectified." (recalled by Craig)

> Tale 2: Night bus to Hampi
> Night buses are typically divided with foreigners travelling in the back and Indians travelling in the front. However, on this particular night, the bus was particularly full and so there were Indians in the foreigner compartment. In the middle of the night, one of the foreign women woke up to an Indian man grabbing her chest. Enraged, she jumped down, grabbed the bamboo stick she travelled with and began to beat him. When the Indians nearby told her to calm down, she told them to fuck off. She pulled off the man's shoes and threw them out the open window. She then ordered the bus driver to stop, which he did, and threw the man off the bus. After throwing him out, she followed him off the bus with her friend and the two of them continued to punch him, kick him and hit him with the bamboo stick. The two women then got back onto the bus and resumed their travel. (Translated by Guy as the woman told her story. Notably, the story drew near hysterical laughter for the people listening.)

The assaults on the Indian men in these two scenarios highlight the use of violence to maintain a neo-colonial order. These assaults reiterate both the lack of availability of white women to Indian men (see Stoler, 2002) as well as the acceptability of violence towards Indian men who challenge this colonial order. Such violence is significant to individuals in privileged social sectors, even if they denounce such violence – violence that would appear contrary to the social construction of innocence – because it enables them to construct themselves as tolerant and accepting against the perpetrators at the same time that they partake in the benefit of violent reproductions of inclusion and exclusion (Hage, 2000). As such, it is part of a coherent project of racism (Perry, 2002).

Reproducing Racialized Patriarchy

Sexuality and sexual hierarchy are critical to establishing both gender and racial hierarchies. In contrast to the subject position of the black man, whose penis is hyperbolic and thus compromises the masculinity of the white man, the psychic castration of the Asian lover, Song, in *M. Butterfly* represents a means by which the masculinity of the white man can be secured (Eng, 2001). The symbolic castration of the Indian man on the Gujurati beach provides a striking instance of such efforts to ensure the hegemony of white masculinity. This example is part of a colonial regime in which "the demasculinization of colonized men and the hypermasculinity of European males are understood as key elements in the assertion of white supremacy" (Stoler, 2002:46). As a response to a threat to white patriarchy, violence is used to impose differential masculinities:

> In the context of white supremacy, we must understand the threat of masculine sameness as so terrifying that only the reassertion of a gendered difference can provide the necessary disavowal. It is this that lynching and castration offer in their ritualized deployment, functioning as both a refusal and a negation of the possibility of extending the

> privileges of patriarchy to the black [or other colonized] man. (Wiegman, 1995:90)

This necessary emasculation of men of colour vis-à-vis white men, which precedes and enables the incident at Gujurati beach, is actively reproduced through interactions between Western travelers and Indian men. Pulling down the pants of the Indian man on the beach is an overt symbolic castration that reiterates the untouchability of Western women, the superiority of Western men, and the protection (read: possession) of Western women by Western men. In spite of its contribution to reproducing gendered and racialized inequalities, this act and others like it are couched in claims of the sexual civility of Western men (Sartre, 2001 [1964]; Césaire, 1972) and the liberated mobilities of Western women.

While women who travel without men are seen to be opening themselves up to risk, women who are groped when with men are not blamed, but are seen as legitimate victims of unwanted harassment, like the women on the beach at Gujurat who were cast as victims rather than instigators. This safety proffered by Western men, alongside the discourse of sexual violence against Western women, reinforces racialized heteronormativity and patriarchal colonialism through discourses and practices that privilege, and reproduce privilege for, Western men. In binding themselves to Western men, Western women reproduce their status as distinct from and unavailable to Indian men. This move mitigates the threat of cross-racialized intimacy, buttressing the assumption of, and desire for, a culturally and biologically distinct West (Stoler, 2002).

In addition, the situation involving the travelers at the Gujurati beach speaks to what Western men have to gain – or maintain – through the discourses of safety (with men travelers) and sexual violence committed by Indian men. By taking up the women's cause

and punishing their inappropriately behaving harasser, the Western man at the beach not only reproduced his role as protector of women travelers, but also starred as a heroic agent who recognized the women's vulnerability and the sexual threat of Indian men.

As the incident on the night bus to Hampi suggests, women travelers are also directly complicit in the reproduction of patriarchy. The woman who beat the Indian man on the night bus was an active participant in colonial violence. Her actions provoked laughter at the restaurant the next morning when she told the story. This laughter turned on the irony of *her* contribution to maintaining a colonial order. This contribution is tied to the gender inversion of a *woman* severely beating a *man* – a manifestation of the emasculation of Indian men discussed above. In this instance, the assumed colonial subjugation of the Indian man on the night bus enabled the discourse that Indian men are insufficiently masculine and are beatable by Western women who share in neo-colonial privilege.

The Indian man's beatability was tied not only to his gender and sexuality, but also to the degree of his human-ness: the Indian man was dehumanized relative to Western travelers. While I do not deny the agency of a harassed Western woman to confront her harassers, the excessive violence of the woman's reaction moved beyond the threshold of refusing cultural relativism to invoking colonial discourses of power and punishment. The shift from self-defence or self-assertion to violence marks a parallel shift in the recognizable humanity of the colonized Other. By beating the Indian man and leaving him on a deserted road in the middle of the night, the woman traveler invoked a particular dehumanization of the man, a dehumanization posited by Césaire's (1972) "colonization = 'thingification'" (p.21) and in Balibar's (1990) theorizing:

> The animality of man, in man against man (whence the systematic 'bestialization' of racialized individuals and human groups) is the particular method that theoretical racism adopts in thinking about human historicity" (p.291).

The laughter of the people in the guesthouse (particularly the two men who found the story uproariously funny) served to undermine their own complicity in patriarchal colonialism by distancing themselves from the storyteller and reiterating their innocence in the matrix of gender, racialization, and colonialism. By casting the violence as an overreaction – a caricature response to the risks inherent in women's unaccompanied independent travels – the audience refused proximity to the assault. In so doing, the audience members were able to benefit from the overt violence, insomuch as it reproduced colonial norms of racialization and sexuality, at the same time that they dismissed the violence. Liberals (such as the travelers in the guest house who were actively involved in the celebration of diversity and self-making practices) rely on overt racists to carry out violent acts that maintain the status quo of inequality (Hage, 2000). The boundaries and power hierarchies that travelers assumed in neo-colonial settings were reinforced by a groped woman traveler, who also reinforced the privilege of the other independent travelers without them having to act in any way that could be judged as inappropriate.

Reproducing Racialized Patriarchy without Violence

Western men traveling independently also participate in the reproduction of a white patriarchy in more direct ways. While the traveler who pulled down the Indian man's pants at the Gujurati beach is an obvious exemplar, there are less hostile means through which Western men participated in reiterating hegemonic relations of power. Several of the men travelers I spoke with mentioned that they had had conversations with Indian men about sex. These conversations provided an opportunity for some Western men to

actively and explicitly reproduce sweeping assumptions about sexuality in the West. I was present for one such conversation between a Canadian man and an Indian man during which the Indian man asked if it was true that in Canada you could have sex with unmarried women. The Canadian man smiled smugly and nodded "yeah...." My comment, "if they want to," was entirely lost in the subsequent exchange about how lucky Canadian men are. By promoting hyperheterosexuality, these men reinforce their masculinity and, simultaneously, the sexual objectification and availability of Western women. Thus, Indian men's understandings of sexual practices in Western countries are actively abetted by Western men who flaunt their sexual encounters with Western women, while omitting appropriate and necessary context.

Indian men also actively participate in the reproduction of a racialized colonialism through less overt means. At the lifeguarded beach at Varkala, as well as other beach destinations popular with low-budget travelers, such as Anjuna and Palolem beaches in Goa, patriarchal relations between Western travelers are reiterated by Indians. The objectification of Western women for Western men is encouraged and supported by the Indians who cater to independent Western travelers. It is explicit in the acts of Indian lifeguards at Varkala beach who not only keep swimmers safe, but also keep all other Indian men off of the beach. In contrast to the Indian men who do grope Western women and are thus deemed threats to Western masculinity, the Indian men who work in these sites (along with Indian men who do not grope Western women) are not perceived to pose any threat. In these beach spaces, Indian men participate in practices that reproduce the sexual threat of Indian men for Western women.

Finally, women travelers also contributed to a regime of racial and gendered inequality. In the beach spaces at Varkala, Kerala and in Goa, Western women can

(though not all choose to) exchange long sleeves and covered legs for bikinis and topless sunbathing, while circumventing the blame assigned to women dressed 'inappropriately' in other travel spaces. Thus, even women who otherwise dress conservatively can take advantage of spaces, incorporated into popular travel routes, in which Western heteronormative practices of femininity and sexualization can be performed for themselves and their male counterparts in 'safe' spaces. Such practices occur alongside, and buttress, the alliances that many women travelers seek with men.

Concluding Remarks

Indian men who seek access to Western women's bodies actively exercise their patriarchal privilege, subverting their racial exclusion at the expense of women's gendered exclusion. In a parallel manner, Western women who take up aggression and violence as a means to confront their harassers (with the implicit backing of Western male power) slip into the colonial aggression which was historically wielded by Western men. These gendered, racialized, and sexualized relations between Indians and independent travelers reinforce patriarchy and neo-colonialism: women who use violence against their sexual harassers are active participants in patriarchy and Indian lifeguards who 'protect' Western women from Indian men are actively participating in legacies of colonialism. Both subject positions enforce a system that excludes Indian men through practices of colonialism and Western women through practices of gender.

Through regimes of patriarchal and racialized neo-colonialism, which were actively reiterated by the Western women and Western men travelers with whom I spoke as well as by some of the Indian men I observed, the complexities and contradictions of the subjectivities of independent travelers to India and Indian residents are denied. This denial

is sometimes subtle, as through the nuanced promotion of heterosexual relations for Western women, and sometimes overtly violent, as for the Indian man on a Gujurati beach and the Indian man on the night bus. Through the reproduction of Indian men's emasculation and Western and Indian women's objectification, (neo)colonial privilege for Western men is reiterated.

This privilege is reiterated through the social construction of innocence: both the aggressive behaviour of Indian men and the sexual vulnerability of Western women are seen to require the intervention of the Western male traveler. It is only by removing themselves from the legacies of colonial rule, as well as the persisting privilege associated with the subject position of the white Western man, that men traveling independently can take up their dominant, albeit obscured, roles vis-à-vis Indian men and Western women.

There is a broader context to these practices. The obvious objectification of Western women and obfuscated objectification of Indian women are simultaneous to the objectification of Indian culture that underpins independent travel (Chapter 4), travel that seeks more meaningful, and innocent, engagement than stereotypical mass tourism. Thus, the Indian man whom the Western traveler claims to "objectify" by pulling his pants down has already been objectified as part of an idealized India: a geography of exoticized, mystical reputation that draws travelers. The traveler seeking to objectify the Indian man did not recognize the cultural objectification that gives meaning to his travel. Narratives of sexual harassment contribute to the objectification of Indian men and Western women, and the subsequent elision of Western men and Indian women. Although these narratives and individual experiences of harassment and violence are embedded within much broader discourses of visibility and invisibility, racialization, and patriarchy, individual independent

travelers can negotiate these systemic inclusions and exclusions through the social construction of innocence.

VI. Gaze, Gift and Guilt: Confrontations with Poverty in Independent Travel

To this point, my dissertation has focused on those discourses and narratives utilized by travelers to mediate or negotiate the broader structural inequalities that contextualize independent travel, in spite of the implicit claims of innocence upon which independent travel is predicated. These constructions and perceptions of innocence are fragile, especially in the case of travel that emphasizes contact with local people, as the 'hosts' sometimes refuse the colonial dichotomies of subject and object that are actively reproduced by travelers, which I noted in my introduction (see "'Unruly' Indians"). While the previous chapters have given primacy to the gaze of travelers and their struggles negotiating those moments when their gaze fails, this chapter focuses on the gaze as a reciprocal practice (Doron, 2005; Maoz, 2006).

By focusing on the requital of tourist relationships, and with particular attention to independent travel, this chapter marks a return to Urry's (2002) conceptualization of the "tourist gaze," first addressed in the introduction. Urry's (2002) theorizing turns on travel as pleasure, the gaze as a means to look at the environment with appreciation (or at least the anticipation of such), and the gaze as dialectically constructed against "non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness" (p.1). In my analysis, however, I scrutinize Urry's notion of the gaze as it is complicated by frustration and guilt when independent travelers become aware of a reciprocal gaze. The notion of the gaze further complicates these travelers' experiences by challenging their ostensibly Archimedean perspective, a perspective buttressed by the infrequent contexualization of travelers' relationships to the Indians with whom they seek meaningful and intimate cultural interactions. In their interactions with assertive or aggressive beggars, travelers are explicitly drawn into the

systems of relations, responsibilities and obligations, and associated judgments that many of them otherwise avoid by emphasizing the individual relationships of their travel and by minimizing its broader structural context. By setting the terms of relationships with travelers as overtly reciprocal, the gaze of the beggar interrupts the disjuncture from home, distancing upon which, Urry (2002) argues, the tourist gaze depends.

Travelers' responses to confrontations with poverty – manifested through their negotiations with beggars who demand money or food – reflect the ways in which complicity and responsibility are denied or accepted, along with the efforts that some travelers make to mitigate or negotiate these inequalities and adhere to the ethics that define their travels as distinct from tourism. Through demands to share wealth, travelers are actively hailed as colonizers, an interpellation they must carefully negotiate in order to maintain the coherency of independent travel as a more socially and culturally responsible practice than stereotypical mass tourism.

After theorizing "the gaze" and "the gift," I analyze travelers' decisions to give and under which circumstances they chose to do so. This analysis incorporates the explanations of poverty provided by some travelers as well as travelers' understandings of their role (or lack thereof) in addressing poverty in India. These narratives represent travelers' self-conscious responses to those moments in which they become aware of both their objectification in a reciprocal "tourist gaze" and the subjectivity and agency of Others through beggars' refusal of the neo-colonial order. As such, these encounters highlight the precarious relations of power and exclusion through which travel operates.

THE GAZE OF GHOSTS

Unlike those locals who work in the tourism industry and have a vested interest in making their critique of colonial relations in ways that are acceptable in formalized tourist spaces (Deutschlander and Miller, 2003), people who are not involved in the tourism sector have little to lose by violating the tourist norms of the traveler-traveled relationship. Beggars are an example of one such group and they often refuse to abide by tourist norms.

The beggar, in the context of independent travel, is an embodied haunting. Like Toni Morrison's Beloved (Gordon, 1996), the beggar is a haunting presence, whose materiality and disruption rail against the exclusion of the beggar as an individual, as well as against the broader system of inequity within which individual exclusion is embedded. Alongside Beloved, who is a metonym for the appropriation of black bodies from Africa to serve white interests overseas, the beggar can be read as a metaphor for India's colonial legacies and the ongoing exclusion of bodies concentrated in the global south. Marked by poverty, beggars represent the tenuousness of independent travel's construction of innocence. Beggars are desired for their aesthetic poverty (Chapter 4) as well as the possibilities they offer for rescue through charity. This desire for the exotic, for the object Other – an Other whose status is assumed to be subordinate to that of the traveling subject (Ahmed, 2004) – is sought first in independent travelers' decisions to travel to India and then in their efforts to seek out 'real' Indians. These efforts reproduce necessary borders between travelers and the Indians they seek:

> Borders need to be threatened in order to be maintained, or even appear as borders, and part of the process of 'maintenance through transgression' is the appearance of border objects. (Ahmed, 2004:87, original emphasis).

However, this border transgression results in an unpleasant proximity: beggars become "sticky" insomuch as they threaten the borders between the subject and "the not" (Ahmed, 2004) by threatening to bind themselves to independent travelers. Though contemporary bodies, beggars carry with them the histories of a colonial past. Through their exclusion, beggars themselves carry "sticky signs" not only of their exclusion vis-à-vis Indian society but also of the historical exclusions of Indians through colonialism:

> What sticks 'shows us' where the object has travelled through what it has gathered onto its surface, gatherings that become part of the object, and call into question its integrity as an object. (Ahmed, 2004:91)

In the case of independent travel, and travel more generally, beggars bear the signs of colonial conquest as uncivilized and deceitful (Macauley, 1975[1835]:122-127; Sherring, 1975[1868]:46, respectively). Though these signs highlight borders between Indians and the colonizers who articulated these differences, they also recall the persisting stickiness of colonial legacies and threaten to situate travelers to Indian in a structural, historical relationship. Thus, in their proximity to beggars, independent travelers are not only confronted with demands predicated upon their wealth and neo-colonizer status, but also, through beggars, the burden of history as travelers and beggars evoke colonial legacies.

Beggars call travelers' attention to the bidirectionality of the gaze: while travelers are watching beggars as ironically "picturesque" Indians in a stereotypically chaotic landscape, travelers themselves are also being watched. Through their unflinching return gaze, beggars in India take up an oppositional politics (hooks, 1992). Drawing on Foucauldian conceptions of power, the oppositional gaze is an important means of wielding resistance:

> Subordinates in relations of power learn experientially that there is a critical gaze, one that "looks" to document, one that is oppositional. In resistance struggle, the power of the dominated to assert agency by claiming and cultivating "awareness" politicizes "looking" relations – one learns to look a certain way in order to resist. (hooks, 1992:116)

Unlike the boatman of Varanasi (Doron, 2005) and the Babas in Dharamsala and Kassol (Maoz, 2006) who are dependent upon a subtle – yet effective – gaze on the traveler for manipulation, many beggars choose to secure alms through an overt, sometimes hostile way of "looking". This antagonism recalls Pratt's (1992) "contact zones". Pratt defines contact zones as the spaces of colonial encounter, but with specific attention to the "copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices" (1992:7) of travelers and hosts that take place within asymmetries of power. Contact zones demand the simultaneous recognition of the subjectivity of the host/traveled/ colonized Other and the acknowledgment of broader patterns of inequality that organize and mediate neo(colonial) relations, such as those between Indian locals and independent travelers.

GIVING UNDER THE GAZE

In addition to imposing a gaze, beggars also trouble conceptions of "the gift." Because of the structural context within which travelers give to beggars, the act of giving is contaminated. In contrast to the ideology of the gift as something given freely (Carrier, 1995), the transactions that occur between travelers and beggars, like other forms of gift-giving, are mediated by the social context in which they occur. Begging violates social conceptions of the gift because money given to someone who has requested it is not necessarily given by choice (McIntosh and Erskine, 2000). Similarly, "a gift is something freely given; it costs the recipient nothing. The distinction to be made here is between the

sociology of the gift – sticky, compelling – and the ideology of the gift – free, disinterested" (T. Hall, 2005:2.3). While Western-centric norms cast the giver as an individual acting out of free will and the receiver as an individual who accepts the gift socially (Carrier, 1995), the impossibility of these liberal imaginaries is magnified in the context of independent travel to the Third World. Beggars' interruptions violate the individualism, freedom, and equality associated with liberalism – ideologies that are themselves intricately woven into practices of independent travel – and call attention to relations of colonialism. For beggars who receive money or food, the social aspects of the gift are overwritten with the economic ends of the gift, as the individual relations between traveler and beggar echo the material privilege of the First World alongside the need of the Third World.

In such scenarios, the gift conjoins utility and morality (Carrier, 1995). While in a liberal sense the gift is understood to be an expression of a real inner self and true inner feelings (Carrier, 1995), this self and these feelings are manifested in response to a desire to be perceived as (and thus a desire to socially construct the self as) a moral being, a desire of particular magnitude because of its resonance with independent travel's tenet of social responsibility. Thus, although Carrier points out that "the ideology [of the gift] asserts that the perfect present and the perfect giver are free," the practice of giving is embedded in and (re)productive of the social processes that organize the relationship between the giver and the recipient (1995:159).

The encounters between beggars and travelers rupture the idealized relations between travelers and hosts by violating two norms of independent travel that obscure travel's connections to a (neo)colonial order. First, beggars' requests for food and money directly interpellate travelers as wealthy, a hail that violates equality, one of the liberal tenets that underpins the ideology of independent travel and helps to designate its

innocence (see Chapter 3). Secondly, through such requests, beggars violate the object status that is assigned to most Indians (Hage, 2000). This object status, elaborated in Chapter 4, is actively imposed by independent travelers upon the Indians they encounter in order to emphasize the cultural basis of their travel. Beggars who request food or money – as agents who clearly articulate their refusal to be passively consumed and instead negotiate their subject positions in confrontational ways – disrupt many travelers' conceptions of poverty as an inert visual effect that dominates the Indian landscape. Moreover, through their demands for money from travelers, beggars refuse the grateful acceptance of transcendent gifts (Carrier, 1995), and instead claim entitlement rather than acquiescing to charity (Silverman, 2002).

Sticky Giving

The independent travelers with whom I spoke struggled with the idea of giving charity to individuals. In their reflections on their encounters and decisions whether or not to give, travelers were very invested in explaining, rationalizing, and justifying their decisions to give, in contrast to the disinterested ideology that underpins gift-giving (T. Hall, 2005). Encounters with beggars were complicated for many independent travelers because of the discourses that underpin independent travel itself. The promixity of beggars – in contrast to their distance as part of the Indian landscape – challenged the boundaries between Self and Other (Ahmed, 2004). The boundaries of essentialized cultural difference, however, are fundamentally necessary to independent travel's cultural basis. Moreover, encounters with beggars situated independent travelers' short-term, voluntary hardships (Chapter 3) alongside long-term, involuntary poverty.

Beggars' requests or demands resonate with the idealized social responsibility of independent travel that marks it as different from mainstream tourism. In addition, the discourses of cultural sensitivity and interaction articulate a necessary willingness of independent travelers to engage thoughtfully and sensitively with the Indians they encounter. Yet, at the same time, road status requires frugality and cultural savvy (Sorenson, 2003), competences that are put at risk by acquiescing to beggars' demands, especially those that are potentially deceitful.

Indeed, the greatest barrier to giving money for most of the travelers with whom I spoke was the possibility (or, for some, probability) that the money might not be charity – to impoverished individuals, to people who had no other means of supporting themselves, to individual beggars as the travelers intended it. In this way, donations to beggars were sticky: many travelers were haunted by the fact that they did not know the people to whom they gave money, and were left questioning whether their gifts were actually going to deserving persons or to pyramid organizations of institutionalized begging. Many travelers were worried that they were being scammed, that some beggars might not be genuine in the poverty they presented. Like the people interviewed by McIntosh and Erskine (2000), travelers felt that appearance helped them judge an individual's need to some extent:

> There was one, one man, one old man, maybe 70, and his legs were like, this tiny and he really looked like he needed money and he, that he... he still looked pretty healthy, so we don't think he would, use, use it for drugs. It didn't look that way. (Emma)

In spite of such markers, many travelers struggled with the possibility of deception:

> They might look ragged and they might look sort of poorish, um, but then, you don't know where they live, and you don't know what their night life is like, and where they sleep, so, before I, would even think about giving money to people who come up and ask for it, I want to have a little minute or two to really think about it and assess whether they actually really are genuinely homeless and poor, you know. People can look poor and still

> have a place to sleep over... At the end of the day, food and shelter is basic necessities in life. (Mark)

This necessary judgment of deservingness resonates with Razack's (1998) analysis of successful refugee claims in Canada. In order to make a successful refugee claim, Razack observes, women are required to be pitiable. This presentation of the cultural Other as supplicant is a colonial requirement that reproduces the Canadian nation state as a benefactor, simultaneously screening out cultural Others who demonstrate strength, resilience, and agency.

Similarly, beggars who were deemed to be capable were denied money by travelers. Travelers' judgment of deservingness was manifested through the desire for bodies that were deemed to be insufficiently weak or unable to work, with an obverse prejudice against bodies that were deemed to be capable of earning wages for a living.

> It's very nice for them to live on the street because again they don't have to work, the street will provide them anything.... We've been in Calcutta, we found this one woman who live on the street with her husband and two children and she sew some, um, the mosquito net, we wanted to she will sew some mosquito net for us and she wanted so much money, you know, like year pay for them and I told her why do you want so much money? She said I want. So we gave her the money, and she was work so lazy and she was doing it so lazy and without, she didn't wanted to work, she don't, doesn't want to work. She prefer to live on the street, so it's her choice of life, so she's happy about it, so I don't want, I don't need to see it and say oh she's living on the streets, it's a shame. (Daniel)

This woman who Daniel identified as a failed entrepreneur stands in contrast to the feeble old man Emma described above. While Emma based her judgment to give the man money based on his age and weight, Daniel was unsympathetic to the woman he judged to have the capacity to work, but who, he believed, was too lazy to do so.

This preference for weak or damaged bodies imposes a gendered gaze that, as in Chapter 5, rearticulates the emasculation of Indian men and reinforces the desire for

impoverished women, children, and men to be passive, frail, feminine, and ignored by their cold-hearted, overly patriarchal state (Razack, 1998). This passivity, frailty, femininity and need for the benevolent intervention of the West – either its states or its traveling citizens – is a dialectical process that sculpts the West as active, strong, masculine and capable of intervening, a construction that repeats the scripts that justified interventions through formalized colonialism.

Many travelers were more troubled by the deception of an institutionalized scam than an untrustworthy individual. These travelers had heard of begging rings, in which individuals were hired to pose as beggars. Through the organization, money was ultimately funnelled to already wealthy entrepreneurs:

> I've heard stories from Indian people saying that um, people hire kids to go out and get money and then they make like, it ends up in some big, some guy whose already rich's hands anyways. He's just like using the kids so, I don't know, it's hard to make a judgment that way. (Conrad)

> I know that there is some, from what I've been told there's some areas where there's more, it's a bit more set up, so people, the people that are asking for the money aren't necessarily getting the money and the ringleader sort of gets the money. So you hear about those, so I tried not to get in those situations, but you don't know. (Maggie)

These organized rings hint towards the structural inequalities that operate between travelers and impoverished Indians. The possibility of a structural organization behind individual encounters with begging suggests that both poverty and efforts to address it operate at a level that exceeds both the traveler and the beggar thereby challenging the individualism often assumed in intercultural interactions. Moreover, these rings, with their wealthy operators, trouble the informal redistribution of wealth as a practice that operates between willing individual participants, shifting the exchange into the realm of institution,

enterprise, and bureaucracy, a shift that violates not only the liberal tenet of individuality, but further disrupts the ideology of the "perfect present" (Mauss, 2001 [1924]).

Regulated Giving

At the same time that travelers refused unsanctioned bureaucracy, they often drew upon other forms of regulation in order to mitigate ongoing judgments about worthiness. For many travelers, giving became dependent on a set of rules about the types of beggars to whom they would give money. Maggie gave to women with babies; Raz gave to children who had mutilations; Conrad and Ian gave to people with obvious severe physical disabilities; Nigel gave to people who appeared to be malnourished or handicapped. Generally, people who appeared working age and able-bodied were understood to be not in need:

> When you see a guy with no legs you think yeah man you you, how do you work? You can't work in India. You can't make business in India, so yeah, I'll probably give 5,10 rupees, it's no problem. He can't work but when you see an able-bodied person who's just begging for the sake that I'm very hesitant because basically in India everyone's got a job as far as I know I mean as far as my driver has told me basically there's a job for people if they want the job. (Ian)

Yet these rules were highly inconsistent and even contradictory amongst travelers. For instance, although Maggie selected women with babies as the group for which she was a "sucker," Nigel specifically rejected this group:

> I've tried to avoid giving it to women who just walk around with babies who look like they've, you know they are obviously dressed quite well, they just look like they're happy to get money by using a child to get money. (Nigel)

Even with these self-imposed restrictions, some travelers continued to be overwhelmed by the enormity of need that they encountered:

> I sort of was like 'set some criteria for yourself.' Handicapped people, kids, maybe kids, mothers and children and oh, you know, and I was like well that's everybody that comes up to me, so you know, so you know, you know I give something every day usually. (Vasu)

Without such restrictions, independent travelers' budgets could easily be overwhelmed, a prospect that is at clear odds with the long-term travel that helps to carve independent travel's niche as distinct from mainstream tourism. Other travelers used the strategy of giving food instead of money in order to control the ways in which their 'gift' could be used. This approach permitted independent travelers to perform cultural sensitivity and social responsibility by enabling charity at the same time that it allowed independent travelers to reassert the savvy associated with road status. However, this approach also backfired. Recognizing the opportunities for food, locals have developed practices to manipulate travelers' desires to be generous.

> I don't give them money. I have tried to give food like there was one guy in the train station that approached us. We were eating bananas and I, okay, he was saying his name, he told me his name and was asking what's your name? And was just making conversation and then he just asked for, if he could have something to eat. Okay, I think, okay this is a nice, a nice boy. And I gave him banana and then he said, uh called to his friends, and (laughs) he said 'Can my friends also have bananas?' So we bought like 8 bananas and we gave away half of it or something. (laughs). So it's like that here, if you give some one, one beggar something, there're all the others who come. (Anton)

Anton and his traveling partner perceived that one 'scam' had been replaced with another. By giving food, they were able to ensure that the people to whom they made a decision to give were, in fact, the people who actually received whatever it was that they were giving and that the 'gift' would not be misused. However, their clear-cut rule about effective giving was undermined when, once again, they found themselves no longer unilaterally determining the amount they gave or the recipients of their giving. This lack of control

compromised this couple's road status and ultimately resulted in a decision not to give anything to any beggars.

One way that some people negotiated the obvious poverty and their fear of being scammed was to give to charities. This type of giving was justified through several logics. If travelers and tourists gave to charities instead of to beggars, one independent traveler hypothesized, there would be less begging and the onus would shift to an organized institutional approach to dealing with the problem of poverty:

> More responsible tourism I suppose is not to give beggars money because you'll encourage it, it's better to give the charities the money to help develop a proper formal way of dealing with them. (Hardeep)

Other travelers felt that giving to charitable organizations was a better way to give because it would lead to a more fair distribution to those who needed it:

> I think that if you want to give money, I think it's better to give to organizations and I mean, not to the, to the people that come, wanting money for you, because then one people get it. It's better to give it to places that try to help all of India, I mean, it's, you can help one person, but there's still millions and millions of people that still have a problem. So, I guess it's fairer to help everybody a little bit than help one much. (Karl)

Another arrangement through which travelers negotiated the poverty they observed and requests for money was to give in the context of what they perceived as a 'more equal' exchange. Hardeep indicated that he would give money to children who performed gymnastics or otherwise entertained him. Emma and Karl reported bargaining ruthlessly for services and then giving their guide or driver a large tip at the end. This practice was shared by other travelers:

> Sometimes I will rather give the money for someone that works for that, let's say if it's a rickshaw driver, not an autorickshaw, like a bicycle rickshaw and he took me like a long distance for only ten rupees, I will give him five rupees more because I know he's working for his money and I want to give him more because I think he, he wants to earn his

> money, so I respect that better than a guy that just walks around the street and asks for the money. (Rina)

These adjudications or justifications shifted the act of giving from representing a 'present' back into an economic exchange. For Rina, and several other travelers, giving money to Indians was not an outcome of their guilt or a means to buttress their personal sense of morality, but rather an extension of a capitalist encounter. For Vasu, this acceptance of the capitalist nature of his travel led to an explicit judgment of the recipient as worthy based on the fact that they were mutual participants in the exchange of labour for money in a broader context of global inequality:

> We are income, basically to I think a large part of the economy. So you know, while at the same time that I understand that these folks, everybody's making a living here and even if I pay double or triple or quadruple (emphasis) what it's worth, it's by and large still not really you know, um, outrageous for me, but it can really make a big difference in people's lives, so it's hard to you know, keep that in your mind all the time, um, and not be the frugal one or the you know, feel like you're getting cheated or whatever all the time. So yeah, because I know there are people who will haggle to the, to the point where you know it's, whatever, that they're not, it must be frustrating. So, you know, I kind of know, you know, I'm you know, it's kind of feels like it's part of the job, you know if I'm lucky enough to be able to travel, then you know I should be generous as much as I can (Vasu)

Yet Vasu's commitment to generosity was not shared by many travelers, travelers who instead attempted to prolong their trips by minimizing their everyday expenses or sought non-commodified intimate interactions (Chapter 4) to transcend the consumerist exchange associated with the practices of mainstream tourism.

Individual Negotiations of Giving

Individual projects of self-development are deeply troubled by encounters with beggars. The independent travelers with whom I spoke had to negotiate the contradictory discourses within which their travel practices were embedded: the road status associated

with independent travel; the self-making, individualism, and egalitarianism of liberalism; and the inequalities that emerged through colonial legacies.

Travelers' uncertainty about giving to beggars is tied directly into minimizing their spending, which, in turn, maps onto road status (Sorenson, 2003). In this context, road status centres on the concept of savvy: knowing the culture in which you travel well enough not to get cheated. The risk of being scammed by a beggar-impostor poses a liability to one's status as a traveler. One traveler clearly articulated the personal, non-financial risks of giving to beggars:

> I tend not to because I feel like doing that puts me in that category of like stupid foreigner, because most people here don't give money. So if you do give money, you're kind of a schmuck. That's, I think, that's what is read. So, sometimes I think that I should give more money on the sly, but I don't. (Leah)

Some travelers found that their time in India made them rethink their decision-making processes about giving, along with the rules they had established to regulate and bureaucratize their giving. While Anton and Hannah changed their strategy by deciding not to give to any beggars in India, other travelers experienced the opposite shift in their thinking. When she arrived in India, Susan was primarily concerned with practicing sustainable development and tourism, projects that she believed were antithetical to begging. However, after spending time in India, she began to rethink the rules she had set out for herself:

> When I first got here that was kind of like 'I can to a stick to the plan, like I'm not in that you know give one rupee or whatever to some person on this street,' but I don't know [...] there's something in my gut that tells me maybe it's ok to give them one rupee, you know like, I don't know if it's just, I don't know what it is. And I can't like, I can't intellectualize every friggin' thing that I do, you know, I just and I don't want to go against like any of my principles, my major principles or anything but I don't know. I'm reconsidering it, because it's not, I don't know, it's just, it's I mean I'm not going to miss it and maybe like, maybe I just shouldn't think about all

> the steps, you know from me giving them the money to what's going to happen, like who's going to get it, all these things. Who cares? Just let it go. (Susan)

Vasu similarly had to rethink the way in which he gave money to beggars, but from the opposite perspective. While Susan was initially adverse to giving any money, Vasu began his visit to India giving generously. Not only was this an expensive approach for him, but he also realized that the money that he was giving made a negligible impact on the overall situation of poverty:

> At first I was just giving out money, giving money, here's some money, here's some money, here's some money, and then I realized I could do that 24/7 right there, I could just sit right there and in a couple of days I'd have no more money left and a small fraction of people (laughs) would have some money, for a day... (Vasu)

Hannah and Anton, traveling together, were ultimately overwhelmed with the extent of need in India, a realization that paralyzed them:

> I don't know if it's good, but usually we just look the other way, because we're not here to save a whole country, we can't so. (Hannah)

Although some travelers recognized the big-picture limitations of the money or food they gave to beggars, some could not reconcile this overwhelming observation with the immediacy of everyday poverty. Liam, who made a point of being very generous to the poor people whom he encountered, struggled with the tension that emerged between dealing with the realities of poverty and the longer term consequences of giving money to beggars, a dilemma with which Ian also grappled:

> The big fear is, it's not fear but, you start giving a few beggars some money, um, then you end up having you know like a horde following you around. Cuz they they know you're gonna give money. I don't really want that either. Um, it's catch-22 as well like um, if you encourage the children to beg by giving them money, do they ever get to school and get educated? No, they don't, cuz they know that mom and dad don't send them to school because they make more money begging on the street. So, ya, I'd like to give them more money but, is that doing a good thing

> or is that doing a bad thing, I don't know. It's good for them at the moment, but not for the future. (Liam)
>
> I mean you never know if, in helping people in those terms is making them more reliant on tourists, do you know what I mean? Like maybe they think okay maybe every tourist now is going to buy me flour and tea and sugar, you know, you can't, you can look it like 13 kids who've got runny noses and diarrhoea and all the rest of it. I think oh God man, three days of chapathi flour is not going to kill me. But it's, again it's a balance, you're not always sure you're doing the right thing. (Ian)

Refusal to Engage

In contrast to the travelers above who clearly grappled with their decisions about giving money to the poor they encountered, or to a charitable organization that might be able to help more broadly, other travelers understood themselves as entirely removed from the poverty they confronted. For some travelers, the presence of poverty was a condition that could be justified or explained so as not to require any sustained engagement, particularly engagement that required the individual traveler to become involved in some way with the issue. There were several different forms that this response to poverty took.

Daniel was an Israeli traveler to India who explained to me that in Israel, all students are required to take classes in business and entrepreneurship in high school. This experience undoubtedly influenced his perception of Indians as unwilling to undertake work and to develop that work into a profit-making ventures. Daniel was not only critical of the woman whose services he had employed to sew a mosquito net (quoted above) and who had failed to conform to a capitalist standard. His critique was extrapolated onto the entirety of Indian culture, reproducing a neo-colonial dichotomy wherein a single cultural Other read as deficient stands for all Indians. His critique was mirrored by that of his traveling companion:

> I went to this tailor and I told him how to make hats. He made hats, he was very happy, he sold me and four of my friends also, he sold hats. I asked him why you don't do a couple of hats, put here and people will see them buy. He said ya, ya good idea and never did it. This is them, this is not the West, I'm sorry. (Gal)

Like Daniel, Gal's reading of the tailor's failure to capitalize on a financial opportunity was similarly projected onto Indians as a whole: "This is them. This is not the West, I'm sorry." For both of these travelers, the poverty they encountered in India was read through a liberal commitment to the individual and implicitly embedded in a capitalist economy (Macpherson, 1992). Thus, although widespread, poverty could be attributed to the actions of individual people who had no motivation to work.

This refusal to judge poverty as unquestionably negative was articulated at considerable length by another traveler. Her commentary reflects the widespread discourse that although many people in Third World countries may be poor, their happiness compensates for this physical poverty. This rationalization mitigates the unequal standards of living and quality of life between travelers (and many people who live in First World countries) and the many people who live on the sides of the streets in India.

> You see the big poverty on the streets, like the kids begging and old people begging for money but I think at some point I'm not, I don't want to look at them and say like oh I feel sorry for them because that's, that's all, it makes me feel uhm, I need to find the word, like I'm better than them... superior, and I don't want to feel that. I think that people who go and say 'oh, he's so poor [...], I feel sorry for him,' it makes him [i.e. speaker] become superior and uh, I think the beautiful thing about India is that they believe that you are born in some caste and you, this is your life and you are supposed to die like this. They don't have uh, the urge to go and get more money and get more rich, I mean they, they see the rich people and I think they might think 'Oh I would want to be like them,' but they accept the way they are, they don't try to be something else. Because they exp-, accept this is from the Hindu, they accept that uh they were born poor and they will die poor and that's the way it is. So if they are happy in the way they live and the life they have, so why should I come and judge that? (Rina)

Although Rina did not judge the poor to be individually responsible for their poverty, she did judge them to be content with their lives. She took up the perspective, noted by O'Reilly (2006) above, that Indians' spirituality not only enables them to withstand poverty, but to embrace it as part of their karmic cycle of life. Raz deployed another discourse to minimize his interactions with the broader context behind the poverty he observed during his time in India. This discourse, like Daniel's and Gal's, resonated with the liberal tenets of meritocracy and opportunity:

> I don't feel uncomfortable because I think that's the way they live. You know, sometime you're up, sometime you're down, so, maybe you could be tomorrow in this way, maybe you could be tomorrow a rich guy. So I don't think that's, this is the way of life, this world, you know. It's natural. (Raz)

For Raz, a person's likelihood of being wealthy or being poor was random, tied perhaps to an ideal free-market system of economics based on individualized meritocracy. This randomness obscured the structural relations of power that produce systematized exclusions. In contradistinction, Raz's guilt was alleviated by the possibility that he might find himself in a position of poverty – an unlikely possibility, given his middle-class standing within a wealthy country.

Gift and Guilt

In contrast to these travelers who held themselves outside of any structural relations with poor Indians, other travelers – particularly those who actively reflected on their decisions about giving money to people who requested it – felt personally inserted in the inequalities between their lifestyle as travelers and that of the beggars they encountered throughout India. One traveler experienced guilt when she could no longer

give to those who asked, and at a more personal level, when she behaved towards beggars in a way she considered inappropriate:

> I think the times when I feel most guilty is when I run out of rupees and people ask me for it or when I get frustrated with people trying to sell me stuff and I try not to get impatient, although I do get impatient and then I think a bit and I think 'That's such poor form' and feel guilty that I'm not more generous or more giving, or that I should be and I think I just sort of hit a wall after a while. (Maggie)

Other travelers were frustrated by this inequality, but did not see it as anything they were personally responsible for and thus refused to accept a position of guilt relative to the poverty of others:

> It doesn't make me feel guilty as much as it makes me feel angry that stuff exists like this and like it gets me angry at like the economic policies that lay behind what's going on. [...] It doesn't make me feel guilty, because it is what it is and I can't change it. Like when someone will come up, will like you know I walk into the store and everyone is like trying to get me to buy stuff and like because they know a Westerner has money and I do, comparatively, so what am I gonna do about that, I can't feel guilty you know. And I see people who have nothing, I don't know, it's just, I'm kind of over that whole guilt thing, like why should I, I can't feel guilty like no one should feel guilty for what they have. (Leah)

Explaining poverty

Travelers were very thoughtful in their reflections on what economic policies lay behind the poverty they observed through the course of their travels. Beginning locally, Anton felt that it was the responsibility of other Indians to address the poverty in their country, rather than look to outsiders to address the issue.

> I don't think it's a good or bad, that we have just stopped giving beggars. Maybe because they're so many and I, I, no, I am, I cannot help them. And also because I think that it's the, they're, not my responsibility, I think it's the community's, the Indians that live in the same area of, like the poor, it's their responsibility that they can have a good life. (Anton)

Maggie concurred with this criticism arguing the current Indian tax system does not place a sufficient burden on the "exceedingly wealthy" segment of the population to provide support for infrastructure and social programs. Further criticism of Indian governmental policy emerged regarding the Indian military program. The funds spent on the nuclear program, as well as on the conflict in Kashmir were seen to draw directly from funds that could be used to address poverty:

> I know that Indian government is spending a lot of money on nuclear energy and stuff like that, and army, and so why don't they use their own money to um, decrease or, lessen the poverty. [...], because I think it's crappy, that, we're sponsoring a girl here in India, ah, our, way from [our country], so we're paying for her every month so she can you know, live, and go to school, and, I think it's crappy for a country that, spends like millions and billions of, you know rupees every year on, on military, and that I, I should, have to pay for something, somebody that's so poor. (Hannah)

Another traveler explained poverty in India as a result of the global capitalist system, particularly as it is manifested through multinational corporations and monetary flows:

> It doesn't necessarily have to do with India specifically, it's just the system, capitalism basically, you know in order for some people to have a lot, some people have to have nothing, so it's just that basic system. [...] It's multinational corporations, you know using cheaper labour here or resources from here, especially now. And now it's even at the higher end, you know it's the outsourcing of jobs like in Bangalore. Before I left I was on the phone with a credit card company or something and ah like, 'You're in India, aren't you?' I said to the woman on the phone, she's like 'Yep, Bangalore.' I was like 'I'll see you soon.' Um, but even so, even at middle class level, and that's the interesting, the interesting part, that you know people who are almost considered middle class here are still servicing middle class in the US, you know and that that, we kind of you know allow that, you know, it's incredible. You know, and just you know you think about you know, it's, it's the market. Yeah. Sorry, I, it makes me pissed so I have a little trouble (laughing) talking about it. (Vasu)

Vasu's insight lies not just in his recognition of the inequalities through which his travel practices operate, but in his efforts to see those inequalities permeating his everyday life in

the United States. His comments are an important signal that it is not only in India that innocence is constructed through the dissociation of travelers from the social, political, economic, and historical structures within which they travel, but it is similarly constructed in their home countries.

One traveler who had given little thought to possible connections between wealth in her country and poverty in India was able to identify the significance of the transnational character of production and distribution during the interview. Reflecting on her lifestyle in Switzerland – in particular, Swiss people's reliance on cheap goods – Emma realized it was directly facilitated by poor working conditions and low pay for the labourers in Third World countries who produced them:

> I guess, because, we have things we buy from stores in Switzerland that are really cheap, we think it's cheap in Switzerland, but someone has to make them. And, if you, it says, even if it doesn't says '[Made] in India,' it says 'Made in some other' like this country, so I mean, we have, we are buying and we don't complain, we're buying it cheap. It doesn't help the people who actually get to make the things for nothing. (Emma)

Thus, both Vasu and Emma were cognizant of the scope of the neo-colonial processes – and their frequent occlusion in travelers'everyday lives – beyond their immediate surroundings.

However, this perspective was not uncontested. Like Daniel and Gal who refused any articulations between Indian poverty and Western wealth, Anton also refused a connection between consumption and lifestyle in the West and poverty in India.

> I don't see this as a global, that the poverty here is at that global level. Is that because we in Western Europe and the States and North America, we have it that, so good that it's influencing India. I don't see it like that, sorry. But the media says (laugh) says it and uh, so, ah, I'm aware of it that maybe I'm supposed to think like that but I don't see it here in India. Maybe it's different in Southeast Asia but I don't see it here. So I don't think that because someone in Britain owns, you know, the big cars or

fancy car, that because someone here do
the resources or something, to have big h

In his analysis, Anton – like other travelers – refus
articulations through which international relations
constructed a global system within which states o
independently of one another. His analysis is bas
growth, without attention to, for instance, the finite
prices that favour Western consumers of "big" or "
wealth that Western nations accomplished under
an ahistorical and insulated perspective leans upo
and individualism that are, in this instance, applie
Assumed to be independent and autonomously a
the global context of transnational capitalism as w
colonialism.

ATTEMPTING CHANGE

Ultimately, many travelers discussed the
possibilities included giving to charities, as discus
broader-term strategy. Upon leaving India, Lexi d
a grassroots organization involved in educating w
communications, she confirmed that she did, in fa
donations were not unproblematic. She chose to
organization in Maharashtra (her favourite state) t
children, believing that its local operations and mi
ensure that most of her money would be used to

support the administration of the program itself. However, she subsequently learned that the organization was not officially a charity and began to question whether it was, in fact, a legitimate organization. She has since stopped donating to the charity and many others

Yasu and Nigel respectively reflected on the amount of money they spent on 'junk' and on hotels. Nigel reflected that he often spent a couple of hundred rupees daily (approximately € 2.40) on accommodation, on transport, on food, on alcohol – this in a country where 2 billion people live on less than $2.00 per day (Yates, 2004). Yasu was a

give marks an intervention into the lives of begging children and their families and thus violates the liberal tenet of individualism and lack of (state) intervention. Given the persuasive liberal discourses of non-intervention and meritocracy, it is not surprising that Emma and Karl did not purchase a camel for the guide, even though they gave the possibility serious consideration. These tenets similarly informed the fixed decisions of other travelers (such as Hannah, Susan, and Lexi) not to give money to individual beggars.

This non-interventionist approach was considerably stronger in those travelers who felt that they had no connection whatsoever to the living and working conditions of some of the Indians they encountered. For these travelers – including Daniel, Gal, Anton, and Simon – the liberal codes of the universal subject, individualism, and meritocracy were mapped onto liberalism's obscured articulations with capitalism (Macpherson, 1975). As a deeply embedded collective understanding, these refusals to engage with poverty feed into conceptions of the Western subject steeped in liberal notions of meritocracy and the "self-made man" (Furnies, 1999).

At the same time that indifference or refusal to engage with poverty implies a non-interventionist approach, it also assumes a moral subjectivity to which individuals are expected to conform:

> Liberal political rationalities are committed to the twin projects of respecting the autonomy of certain 'private' zones, and shaping their conduct in ways conducive to particular conceptions of collective and individual well-being. (Rose, 1999:48-9)

For some independent travelers in India, individuals who are (or appear to be) poor due to their lack of initiative are not simply disregarded, but judged. This judgment reiterates not only liberal normativity, but also the difference between Self and Other.

The guilt that some travelers (including Maggie and Vasu) expressed at not being able to give sufficiently to make a long-term difference in the lives of beggars or at their lifestyle of travel (in contrast to those they observed in the places they traveled) emerges from the inconsistency of liberal universalism. Although liberalism assumes a universal subject (Goldberg, 1993) and equality of individuals (Arblaster, 1984), encounters with poverty challenge these principles. In this way, guilt is one outcome of the recognition that individuals are situated in economic, social, political, and historical contexts.[25]

Yet, guilt, although it marks individuals' recognition of their location in a broader system of social relations and thus points to the fragility of the social construction of innocence, is potentially co-opted by hegemonic discourses. Collectively, guilt can be a process through which (neo)colonial or other exclusionary practices and policies can be negotiated in liberal societies predicated on equality and freedom. As a nation-building project, Ahmed (2004) suggests that the national subject can be reconciled to itself by bearing witness to its historical injustices and to the pain of the Others that were marginalized through past wrongs:

> *Shame 'makes' the nation in the witnessing of past injustice, a witnessing that involves feeling shame, as it exposes the failure of the nation to live up to its ideals. But this exposure is temporary, and becomes the ground for a narrative of national recovery. By witnessing what is shameful about the past, the nation can 'live up to' the ideals that secure its identity or being in the present.* In other words, our shame *means that we mean well...*" (2004:109, original emphasis)

Guilt, then, provides an opportunity to begin the deconstruction of innocence at the same time that it offers the opportunity to secure innocence.

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[25] Notably, guilt is only one such response. Leah, for instance, recognized the structural relations that situated her travel to India, but did not subscribe to guilt. Rather, she found it a useless and unproductive feeling.

Through their responses to poverty, independent travelers' articulated convictions about inequality that were not only personal, but also deeply rooted in sweeping discourses of liberalism and the Western subject. As such, their efforts to secure their individual innocence operated in tandem with broader projects to secure innocence in the face of colonial legacies at a multitude of collective levels.

VII. Rethinking Identification, Inequity and Innocence: Concluding Remarks

> In the literature of the imperial frontier, the conspicuous innocence of the naturalist, I would suggest, acquires meaning in relation to an assumed guilt of conquest, a guilt the naturalist figure eternally tries to escape, and eternally invokes, if only to distance himself from it once again. Even though the travelers were witnessing the daily realities of the contact zone, even though the institutions of expansionism made their travels possible, the discourse of travel that natural history produces, and is produced by, turns on a great longing: for a way of taking possession without subjugation and violence. (Pratt, 1992:57)

I began this research with a desire to explore independent travel as a complicated project, one that both reproduced and challenged the neo-colonial asymmetries within which it is embedded. My interest in this specific project resulted from the comment of a colleague that travel, in particular the soul-searching backpacking undertaken by youth and young adults on Third World landscapes, was a "liberal bourgeois" project. I had expected to find that independent travel was a "liberal bourgeois" project that reproduces neo-colonial asymmetries at the same time that it was a creative form of travel that undermined and subverted those same asymmetries through the practices of travelers. Theoretically and empirically, this was an interesting project to me as I imagined identifying the chasms in the neo-colonial relations that dominate the global landscape of travel.

My analysis, however, has yielded troubling results. Independent travel operates as a set of discourses, which Mills (1997) defines in general as "sets of sanctioned statements which have some institutionalised force, which ... have a profound influence on the ways that individuals act and think" (p.55). Thus, the discourses of independent travel – innocence, social responsibility and adventure – exceed the independent travelers who invoke them. These discourses themselves are contextualized within the overarching

discourse of liberalism, "the set of rules and procedures for the production of particular discourses" (Mills, 1997:55). Liberalism, as knowledge and practice, is sanctioned by institutions like education and law and underpins universalizing concepts such as citizenship. Thus, the construction of innocence exceeds travelers themselves and is not a form of false consciousness, but rather a means through which travelers are subjects "engaging in their own constitution, acquiescing with or contesting the roles to which they are assigned" (Mills, 1997:41). The lack of travelers' contestation of the roles to which they were assigned reflects the powerful hegemony of liberalism as a medium through which Western subjects are constituted.

As in past, formal practices of colonialism (see Sartre, 2001), the liberal Self has remained deeply embedded in practices of exclusion and marginalization. Independent travel's frame of social responsibility and cultural sensitivity has not disrupted the relationship between the search for the liberal Self and (neo-)colonialism. Rather, as I argue in Chapter 3, identification with a liberal Self is a means through which travelers distinguish travel from tourism, and thus arrive at a more insidious form of neo-colonialism than the crass cultural insulation and consumption that many travelers associate with mass tourism. Through this emphasis on the liberal Self – manifested, for example, through the celebration of diversity, ostensible egalitarianism with the Indians encountered, and practices of asceticism, hardship and suffering – independent travel claims an innocence that is denied to more mainstream forms of tourism.

Yet this innocence is belied by the Otherness that almost all independent travelers sought. Although Urry (2003) celebrates the arrival of the post-tourist who engages in the irony and performance of tourism, the travelers with whom I spoke were deeply committed to finding 'authentic' India and 'authentic' Indians (Chapter 4). Like visual-cultural

representations of India and Indians circulating in the photographs of the *Lonely Planet*, *National Geographic* and television media, travelers actively sought instances of the Other that conformed to tropes that reproduced colonial disparities, such as primitiveness, lack of education, and poverty. Those Indians and Indian landscapes that challenged such tropes – including middle-class, urbanite Indians who live lifestyles not dissimilar to those of independent travelers – were actively ignored or critiqued by travelers who sought to define their relationship to Indian and Indians through Otherness, rather than through commonalities. Although the innocence of independent travel is undermined by the Orientalist gaze with which they represented India and Indians, this gaze served to reproduce their innocence. Through the construction of India and Indians as Other, independent travelers achieved the distance necessary for innocence at the same time that this detachment enabled travelers' desires for culturally meaningful and intimate encounters.

This detachment from the Other was manifested in the violence that was imposed upon the bodies of Indian men who challenged the gendered and racialized colonial status quo, which I analyzed in Chapter 5. The social responsibility that frames independent travel broke down when Indian men were violently assaulted for their sexual harassment of white women travelers. Although this violence contravened conceptions of innocence, the ostensibly vulnerable bodies of white women were used as justifications for such violence.

Moreover, the issues related to women travelers' vulnerability also speak to the inequitable distribution of innocence within travel. That is, although the innocence of men travelers was not challenged, the innocence of women travelers was. Women who were judged to be acting inappropriately were deemed to be not innocent, to be responsible for actions of Indian men they encountered. This analysis also speaks to the gendered

limitations imposed upon liberal practices of Self-realization. In contrast to men, whose entitlement to travel – and to travel alone – was not judged by any travelers, the majority of the travelers applied conditions to the possibilities for women's travel. By policing women's travel practices and blaming women engaged in 'inappropriate' activities for the sexual harassment they encountered, independent travelers imposed limitations on women's involvement in masculinist practices of self-realization that buttress independent travel.

Participants' constructions of innocence did not go unchallenged. Indeed, this innocence was challenged regularly by agentic Indian subjects. In their encounters with beggars, many travelers were forced to engage directly with inequalities within which their travel was embedded through their awareness of the bidirectionality of the tourist gaze (Chapter 6). Although travelers were forced to confront these inequalities and their claims to innocence, this innocence was ultimately reiterated through decisions based on the liberal tenets of meritocracy and individual achievement. Many travelers felt either that giving money to beggars was an unsustainable form of change and thus was not in the best interest of beggars to give or that beggars who lived in squalid conditions had, in some way, chosen to live their lives in such conditions. Through these justifications, the hegemonic character of independent travel emerged most clearly.

Hegemonic Independent Travel

Although I have identified challenges to and fractures in the liberal Self that underpins independent travel, the neo-colonialism that also operated in independent travel was less fragile. Individual travelers were highly adept at rationalizing the broader context of neo-colonialism within which these challenges and fractures to the liberal Self took

place. Adherents to independent travel successfully drew on discourses of innocence as a means to justify the inequities that they saw around them or that were called to their attention. The resilience of (neo-)colonialism (Behdad, 1994) has enabled its hegemony amongst independent travelers.

Even those travelers who were particularly thoughtful about their travel were unable to transgress the global hegemony within which their travel was situated. Vasu was critical of the broader context of his travel and grappled with the idea of staying in a cheaper hotel and giving the money to someone who needed it. Yet he still found himself staying in polished establishments. Vasu also considered the possibility of not traveling and instead giving the money he would spend on a trip to a charity. He admitted, however, that the chances of actually making this decision were highly unlikely. Maggie similarly found herself struggling with the notion of travel while she embraced it. Working for an NGO in India, she recognized that she could do similar work in her home country, yet was drawn by and actively consumed the Otherness that frames travel to India and the Third World more broadly:

> Being in a different country you learn so much and it's that opportunity to learn I think from a different place as well and I could get that at home in certain areas as well, but you're sort of immersed in it more so here and it's that otherness, or the seeing something more a different than what we're used to at home. It's that opportunity to learn, which I think people used to always say oh you're doing such good work and ... I would think it's actually quite selfish of me to pick up and just go somewhere else because I think I gained so much out of the work that I'm doing just from the opportunity to spend time in a culture and to learn about religion and the culture, and the tradition and the arts and the languages and the food that I very much take. (Maggie)

For both of these travelers, travel remained imperative, in spite of their awareness of the complications it posed. This imperative speaks not to their individual weaknesses or hypocrisy, but to the embeddedness of travel as a self-making project within the broader

discourse of Western liberalism. Travel to the Third World turns on a desire to know the Other, at the same time that this Other is refused. Both Maggie and Vasu refused the personal innocence that many other travelers sought. Instead, their travel was tinged with guilt. Yet this individualized guilt is suggestive that independent travel could be done differently, to a more humane end. The narratives of independent travelers, the lack of subversion in their 'alternative' activities suggests that independent travel is tightly bound to both liberalism and neo-colonialism, and as such is an unlikely vector through which to effect social change in spite of its claims to social responsibility.

Road Status vs. Social Responsibility

Some of the biggest obstacles to independent travelers achieving the social responsibility that defines characteristics of their alternative form of tourism are the very parameters of that travel itself. Backpacking and independent travel, because of their unstable population and unstable physical geography, rely upon the norms of road status to perpetuate the subculture (Sorenson, 2003). Yet road status is itself inconsistent with a desire for social responsibility. For instance, the status achieved through 'knowing' the Other and the Other culture so as not to be cheated is put at risk through encounters with beggars, as noted in the previous chapter. It appears that road status has ultimately more gravity than the status attained through socially responsible practices, as evidence in many travelers' decisions not to give to beggars. When confronted with decisions that could not be based on accurate judgments, these travelers opted to err on the side of not making fools of themselves by not being cheated, rather than on the side of generosity.

One of the reasons that travelers could not easily make decisions to give is that the desire for Other, which undergirds independent travel to the Third World and cultural

tourism more generally, operates in tension with distancing of that Other. This distance ensures that the Self is not so deeply implicated in the Other. The Other that is required for the construction of a liberal Self is socially, politically, economically, and geographically removed from the Self. Those Others that are not sufficiently distant – those middle class Indians whose lifestyles overlap with middle class travelers – are invisible.

The construction of innocence functions to separate the Self from the Other (which it dialectically requires) insomuch as innocence enables the denial of immediate involvement and of connection through social processes. Analyzing claims and possibilities for global justice, Young (2006) argues for a "social connection model" to conceptualize responsibilities within a framework of global social processes. This model "says that all agents who contribute by their actions to the structural processes that produce injustice have responsibilities to work to remedy these injustices" (Young, 2006:103). Considering the transnational example of sweatshop labour used to produce cheap apparel, although it is usually inappropriate to blame "those (us)" who are indirectly involved in processes that harm others, it is similarly inappropriate to allow "them (we)" to suggest that "they (we)" are not implicated (Young, 2006). Conceptualizing social structure as a process, individuals are connected to social structure through their actions: "individuals bear responsibility for structural injustice because they contribute by their actions to the processes that produce unjust outcomes" (Young, 2006:119). Notably, individuals involved in social processes are all not equally responsible to address social justice. Because of individuals' different power and privilege within social processes, obligations are asymmetrical as those with greater institutional and material status are able to effect greater change than those who are rendered more vulnerable (Young, 2006)

Translated from the transnational sweatshop production of apparel to independent travel, independent travelers, like the middle-class consumers of inexpensive clothing, are similarly implicated in global social processes by their respective consumption of cultural Others and garments. At a deeper level, these middle-class Western citizens are active agents in the repetition of previous actions, which, collectively, have "determinate effects on the physical and cultural environment, effects that condition future action in specific ways" (Young, 2006:113). While others may bear more responsibility in the social chain of global travel and tourism (including those who participate in transnational tourism developments that remove power from local decision-makers and money from local economies), independent travelers cannot be said to be isolated from the social processes within which their travel occurs.

The ostensible innocence of independent travel deflects travelers' social connectedness to marginalized Indians and to the broader global framework of neo-colonialism that enables their travel. Through innocence, many independent travelers exempt themselves from any responsibility to remedy the inequalities upon which their travel is predicated.

DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES[26]

It is clear from my analysis that independent travel, as an alternative form of culturally-based tourism, remains deeply implicated in the reiteration of socio-cultural neo-colonial asymmetries. These asymmetries turn on the absence of the Indian subject for which an Indian object – understood as an object for the consumption and self-making practices of Western travelers (see Hage, 2000) – is substituted.

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[26] This subheading and reflection is motivated by Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) analysis of decolonizing practices in the realm of research.

For Research

The absence of particular voices in the experiences of many travelers parallels the absence of two voices in my own research: the non-Western travelers and the local Indians with whom travelers engaged. Although I interviewed non-white travelers, these individuals identified strongly with their Western backgrounds and adhered to the narratives of independent travel. They drew on discourses that exoticized India as a landscape and emphasized the importance of encounters with authentic Indians (Chapter 4), which together produced a backdrop against which diasporic travelers (alongside white Western travelers) could highlight the difference between Self and Other in order to engage in the project of liberal self-development. Moreover, the emphasis on Indian culture, with almost no reference to 'race', by all of the travelers, served to further align diasporic travelers with white Western travelers.

As the numbers of Asian backpackers has increased, both independent travel itself and the research that is conducted on independent travel have been opened to critiques of Western-centrism (see Tao and Leong, 2005). An exploration of the experiences and travel narratives of non-Western independent travelers would yield a reflection on travel that is informed by neo-colonial asymmetries, but not necessarily the Western practices of liberal subject-making. In addition, such a focus would complicate the neo-colonial context of independent travel by complicating the relationships between racialization and neo-colonialism.

Secondly, the voices of Indians are hushed in my analysis. Although Indians are present as shadows in my research, they are not foregrounded in a concerted way. This absence, as noted in Chapter 2, is tied to the significance of transience, which abets the accumulation of places, an important principle of independent travel (Sorenson, 2003).

Certainly, this research would be complemented by an engagement with the ways in which Indians who encounter independent travelers construct those travelers and negotiate their interpellation as objects for consumption. What I have achieved, I believe, is a preliminary step towards this end. The deconstruction of and intervention into neo-colonialism requires an understanding not only of the effects upon and negotiations of such neo-colonialism by those who are excluded, but also by those who actively reproduce it. This understanding is particularly significant when those who reproduce neo-colonialism actively construct themselves and their practices as innocent alternatives to otherwise harsh regimes, in this case, of tourism.

– For Travel

At the end of this research process, I am left questioning whether there are possibilities for subversive travel – culturally-based travel, in particular – that challenge the neo-colonial asymmetries in which it is embedded. Such an alternative form would certainly be buttressed by less transience within travel, an observation that I recognized as a researcher, alongside travelers like Nigel and Vasu who claimed they would do their trip again with fewer places and longer stops in order to give themselves a chance to engage in a more meaningful way with the Indians they do encounter. Longer interactions or interactions that are prefaced with (guided) self-reflexivity may set up the possibility of seeking not only Otherness, but also commonality and thus a disruption to the mutually exclusive categories of Self and Other. Tied to this search for the Other, however, is an assumption of entitlement to know the Other. More socially just travel is more democratic travel, in which communities get to determine whether and to what extent they will participate in cultural travel (Nowicka, 2007). It is also travel in which those who are

employed in the tourism industry work under safe conditions and are fairly recompensed for their labour (Nowicka, 2007).

A subversive form of travel requires not only that Others are democratically involved *and understood by* travelers to be more than cultural Others, but also that travelers recognize that the culture that underpins culturally-based travel is not only the culture of the traveled, but that of the traveler as well. In this sense, the entanglement of the Self – as individual, subcultural, national, supranational – must be foregrounded and connected with global social processes towards an end of more socially just travel.

Yet even the desire for subversive or socially just travel begs attention to why travel is significant to many individuals, communities, and even nations. In some instances, travel is important to the construction of an imagined community nationally. In New Zealand, the "big OE" (i.e. overseas experience) has become informally institutionalized as a means of nation-building (Bell, 2002). Given compulsory military service in Israel, independent travel has become a rite of passage for those people who have completed their service. Not only does this widespread practice build common experiences among Israelis, but it also provides a release valve for young Israelis who have experienced extremely intense and antagonistic activities. As Rina put it, consistent with comments by Sara and Daniel:

> After the army because you have after such an intense time and uh it's very hard emotional and everything and the life are very intense, so uh, we want to go and travel and feel the freedom.

Thus, Israel as a state is at least in some part dependent on the travel experiences of its young citizens to offset the emotional and psychological demands of compulsory military service in a highly volatile setting.

In contrast to travel as a practice institutionalized through nation-building, which provided some travelers with an explanation of their decision to travel, it was more

common that individual travelers' rationale could not be articulated so clearly. In contrast to Sara, Daniel and Rina who focused on the freedom and recovery associated with their travel and that of many young Israelis, many other participants people could provide only *obscure reasons to explain their travel: "we always had a dream of going abroad* somewhere" (Anton); "I always wanted to go to India I don't know why" (Leah); "since I can remember India was calling my name, I mean from when I was like 16, I knew I needed to go to India, I can't explain it" (Eli).

Some participants commented specifically on what travel to Third World countries offered that travel to First World countries did not:

> I've traveled Europe and I don't think people had been as receptive to that kind of thing [i.e. sharing culture], whereas in developing, what I've to travel to developed [*sic*: developing] areas it's just like an outpouring and they're giving you their knowledge, letting you share their experiences. (Nigel)

> Being in a different country you learn so much and it's that opportunity to learn I think from a different place as well and I could get that at home in certain areas as well, but you're sort of immersed in it more so here and it's that otherness, or the seeing something more a different than what we're used to at home. It's that opportunity to learn. (Maggie)

> I do like traveling and I like seeing different things and I like different experiences and meeting different people and all that kind of stuff, so I'm a traveler at heart,... it's just you learn so much more and I learn about myself by kind of putting myself in a new environment. (Susan)

These comments reflect a liberal commitment to education and self-development. This commitment is also tied into the establishment of an imagined community, albeit one that is not geographically defined like a nation, but is instead ideological. What is evident in the above statements by Nigel, Maggie, and Susan is the importance of difference to their traveling projects. While Maggie and Susan, in particular, have clearly identified the "otherness" and the "different" things, experiences, and people that were necessary for

their self-development, this theme – as this body of work has articulated in a multitude of forms – was significant to many participants' experiences in India. Difference as a critical element is somewhat contrary to the liberal celebration of diversity insomuch as difference interrupts the possibilities for equality and insomuch as liberalism is predicated upon an implicit universalism (Goldberg, 1993).

In this way, travel is a modern project. It is steeped in the flows and mobilities that characterize our contemporary era (Urry, 2000). It is also steeped in patterned exclusions that emerged with the industrial revolution (Macpherson, 1992) marking the modern era. Independent travel, as an institutionalized alternative practice of travel that orients itself through principles of benignity, if not benevolence, actively seeks to move beyond these constraints. Indeed, the social construction of innocence serves precisely this function: in decontextualizing travelers from the broader relationships of difference and power that circulate in their encounters with Indian people and spaces, the social construction of innocence enables travelers to understand their travel through the liberal lens of individualism. Through innocence, their encounters with inequality are mediated by their personal orientation towards this inequality. Yet, in spite of the actions and intentions of individual travelers, they cannot operate outside of the discourses and practices of liberalism and neo-colonialism through which both they and their travel are constituted.

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IX. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview Schedule

The following are themes and guiding questions that I used to conduct my interviews. As my interviews were semi-structured, I did not ask the questions verbatim, nor did I ask all questions to all participants. Many of the questions were followed with probes. In particular, I asked for examples. I used these examples and travelers' overall responses to identify relevant themes for that person and to frame subsequent questions about their travel.

Introduction

What are you looking for in your experience in India?
How is backpacking an alternative to more conventional tourism? How does it run into the same problems?
What forms of tourism are better? What forms are worse?
What makes good tourists/travelers/backpackers? What makes bad tourists/travelers/backpackers?
What do your friends and family think of your travel to India? Your travel more generally?

Travel in India

Tell me about your trip to India so far.
Why did you pick India as a travel destination?
What is the best place you've been or the best experience you've had so far?
What is the worst place you've been or the worst experience you've had so far?
Have you had any major difficulties?
What do you miss the most from home?
Did you experience culture shock?
What do backpackers do all day? What do you like to do?
Some people I've talked to have spoken about "real India" or "authentic India." What do you think they mean? Do you think "real" or "authentic" India exists?

Travel in general

Why do you travel?
What is your definition of "backpacker"? Do you think they are different from tourists? Why?
Are you a backpacker?
What is responsible tourism?
How would you like to interact with local Indians? Have you managed to do that? How?

How do you interact with other backpackers?
Do you prefer to avoid other tourists? Other backpackers?
Do you ever have interactions with tourists at home?
What are some of the negative impacts of travel or tourism?
What do you feel you bring to India through your travel?

Poverty

Did you prepare yourself to deal with the poverty in India? How? How have you reacted?
Do you see a relationship between poverty in India and wealth in your country?
How do you deal with beggars when they ask you for money?
Do you give to charities?
How do you feel about price differentials [i.e. different prices for Indians and foreigners at major tourist destinations like the Taj Mahal]?
Do you feel guilty when you travel?
How do you think about the unidirectionality of travel?
Have you noticed much wealth in India? Any thoughts about that?
Do you ever need a break from India? If so, what do you do?
Do you ever treat yourself while you're here?

Home ← → India

What is the significance of your nationality to your travel?
What will you bring from India back home with you?
What is the impact of travel at home – on you? On your country?
Will you maintain relationships with Indians?
While traveling, do you feel any responsibilities to Indians? To your country? To other travelers?

Embodied Travel

How has your body impacted your travel?
Have you been sick?
Are you ever worried about your safety?
How do you choose places to eat and sleep?
Are you concerned about your physical appearance?
By what forms of transport have you moved through India?
What kind of relationship have you had with guides or taxi drivers? How have you negotiated control over your movement?
Do you do much walking in the places you visit?
Do you try to get off-the-beaten-track? How so?
What are the consequences of off-the-beaten-track travel?

Trust

Has there been a time when you trusted someone and it didn't work out, or when you didn't trust someone and it did work out?
Someone travelers have mentioned to me that they don't feel like they can trust any Indians. Do you feel that way? Why or why not?

Have you had any relationships with guides? Can you describe those?
Do you feel you are at risk as a traveler? What kinds of risks do you encounter? Why?
Do you use the *Lonely Planet*? Another guide book? Why?
What changes would you make to the guide book?
Have you come across any government travel material? Privately-produced travel material?
How do you feel money factors into your relationships with the Indians you meet?
Are you able to overcome the commodification of your encounters? How?

Special Topics

Slum tourism
Why or why not?

This line of questioning didn't get very far because I didn't come across organized slum tourism, nor did any of the people with whom I spoke. This surprised me because I had been on a slum tour on my previous trip to India.

Photography
Do you take photos?
What do you like to take photos of?
Are there things you won't take photos of?
What's your favourite photo so far?

Guided Tours
Have you taken any guided tours? Why or why not?
Is it possible to be friends in a client context?
How do you negotiate control over what you want to see or do?
Do you think you get better access to history and culture through a guide?

Journal
Do you keep a journal? If so why?
What kinds of things do you record?
What do you think you will do with your journaling when you get home?

Bottled water
Do you drink bottled water?
What is the impact of bottled water on the environment?
Have you tried any alternatives to bottled water? How successful have they been?
How do you balance your health with the environment?

Summary

Was personal growth something you were looking for when you came to India?
What are the biggest lessons you've learned through your travel in India?
What things do you love about travel in India? What things frustrate you about traveling in India?

Have you learned things that will make you change the way you live your life at home?
How would you change your trip if you were to do it again?
What will you tell your family and friends when they ask how your trip was?
Some travelers have said they're disappointed with their trip. Are you?
What will you miss the most when you get home?

Appendix 2 – Participant Biographies

Anton was traveling through India with **Hannah**. I met them on a train from Mumbai to Goa. Anton's claim to fame was his desirability to biting insects: when I met him, he had several large blisters (resembling severe burns) that were the result of insect bites; it was quite unlike anything I had ever seen. Anton had a background in hospitality studies through his schooling and so he had many well-formulated and interesting ideas about tourism. He was particularly interested in the environmental impacts of tourism and was supportive of backpacker-oriented accomodation and services because they made considerably less impact on the environment than resort-style tourism. Although he was shy to speak with me on the train, when we encountered each other again on the beach, he was eager to talk with me. One of the major issues Anton struggled with in India was the food. He found that all of the curries upset his stomach and wanted to be able to have simpler meals that he could prepare himself.

Conrad traveled from Canada to India to attend his best friend's wedding. He had not traveled before and spent the early part of his trip with his friend and his friend's family. Conrad had always been intrigued by India. He traveled alone and had hoped to see many "bizarre" cultural things, but also had a vast appreciation for the natural environment. He spent the first few months of his trip hiking in the mountains and then made his way to the west coast and down to Kerala. He was returning back to Canada at the end of his trip. Conrad worked for an environmental consulting firm in Canada and was very committed to environmental causes. He struggled with his need to drink bottled water – he had tried to use a filter he brought with him, but found that with filtering, he still became ill – and the problem the non-recyclable plastic this required posed to the Indian environment. I met up with, and interviewed, Conrad twice during my trip.

Daniel was one of the few independent travelers I spoke to who understood India as something of a playground for his enjoyment. We spent several days at the same hotel in Hampi and did some local touring together. Daniel, an Israeli, had been to India once before with his current traveling partner, **Gal**. Both were traveling after they finished their business degrees and before they started their careers. One of Daniel's dreams was to buy an Enfield motorcycle and ride through India fully independently. He planned on returning to India repeatedly throughout his life.

Eli was introduced to me by **Sophie** (who felt some sense of obligation to set me up with an interview because her friend, who had committed to an interview, was too ill to participate). Eli was Israeli and had just completed his compulsory military service. He spent the first part of his trip in northern India spending time with many other Israelis. However, after a while, he decided that, by always hanging out with other Israeli travelers, he had simply brought Israel to India. Eli's trip was dominated by his search for spirituality. On his return to Israel – at a date that was not yet determined – Eli would return to school to upgrade his courses so that he could pursue post-secondary. (At least, this was the story he told to his parents so that they would continue to fund his travel.)

Emma was born in India and adopted by a white Swiss family, who were, as she and her boyfriend **Kris** told me, "very Swiss." Because she often passed for Indian, she had a very different travel experience than many of the white women travelers with whom I spoke. Emma had always wanted to return to India to see where she was from and shortly after our interview, she was going to visit the orphanage from which she had been adopted, an arrangement she had made from Switzerland. In contrast to Kris, she had very little interest in learning about Indian culture or religion. Throughout her time in India, she felt that, had it not been for her adoption, that she could have been one of the people living in poverty along the streets or the railroad tracks. Emma had finished high school and was putting together a portfolio so she could pursue photography at an art school. At 20, she was the youngest traveler I interviewed.

Gal traveled to India with **Daniel** for the second time. After finishing his business degree, Gal was spending 2 months in India before starting to look for work. Like Daniel, Gal saw India as an opportunity for an inexpensive vacation. Gal had an ambiguous relationship to India. He didn't like the food, he didn't like the people, and he didn't like the traveling, but taken altogether these combined into an "authentic" experience for him. I spent several days with Gal before interviewing him. When we did the interview, it was his preference that we do it in front of a group of his friends (other Israelis who had arrived in Hampi a few days after we did) in spite of my suggestion that we do it in a more private setting. Gal was a very funny guy and always the centre of attention (something Daniel was a bit bitter about). At the beginning of the interview, he took great pains to be funny for the audience. At the end of the interview, however he was disappointed that I didn't have more questions for him.

Hannah was in India as part of a round-the-world trip with her partner, **Anton**. We met on the train from Mumbai to Goa as they were coming down the western coast of India. They had begun their trip in northwestern India along with Hannah's father and brother. The four of them had hired a car for a tour of Rajasthan, similar to the one that I did. Originally, Hannah and Anton had planned to circumnavigate India, going down the west coast to the southern tip and then back up the eastern coast to Calcutta. Hannah had always wanted to travel to India for a reason she couldn't identify. Not many people from the area she was from in Norway did much traveling and so just by being in India, she was doing something that very, very few people she knew had done. Hannah was not very happy with her trip to India, she confided after our interview finished. After heading along the south coast, she emailed me to let me know that she and Anton decided they had had enough of India and made arrangements to fly to Sri Lanka, where she seemed much happier.

Hardeep's parents had extended family in the Punjab and he traveled to India to spend some time with them. He spent 5 weeks with his extended family and then circumnavigated India. His trip to India was 2½ months as part of a one year trip around the world. In Germany, Hardeep was a project manager for a well-known transnational corporation and he had taken a year's leave from his position. As a person of Indian ancestry, Hardeep understood his travel experiences as significantly different from white travelers. Not only was he able to spend extended time in an intimate setting with his family, his interactions with Indians he did not know (particularly other Punjabis) he

believed were far more welcoming. Hardeep was quite critical of Indian culture, particularly the religious dogma and superstition he encountered when he stayed with his family. At the end of our interview, when I asked if he had any questions, Hardeep was one of the few people to ask me questions. In fact, he questioned me for over an hour.

Ian was an ultra-excited, super-eager traveler. He was thrilled to be in India, 2½ month stopover on his journey home to New Zealand from Sweden where he had been living for several years. We met on a museum tour in Bikaneer (during which the English translation provided by the guide was significantly shorter than the original explanation in Hindi). On his return to New Zealand, Ian was going to study nursing because he felt it was one way he could make a difference and it would also provide him with opportunities to work and volunteer internationally. Ian was one of the older travelers I interviewed as he was in his early 40s. Ian wanted desperately to meet Indian people and to spend time with them. His ideal travel experience was to meet an Indian family and hang out with them in their home so that he could understand how they lived their everyday lives. Ian also hired a driver and had struggled to balance his position as a client with his desire to have non-commodified relationships. Originally, Ian had hoped to do some volunteer work with children in Calcutta. During a follow-up email exchange, he indicated that he hadn't planned well enough in advance to actually volunteer, but that it was something that he planned to do in the future.

Jana had traveled from England where she had been working as a temporary foreign nurse (like **Kate**) for three years to do a 1 month intensive yoga course in Mysore. (Unfortunately, we did our interview in the dark and I could not see that the recorder was not recording. As a result, all I have from our interview was the summary I wrote immediately afterwards.) We met in Goa where she was spending a few days before returning back to Australia to spend Christmas with her family. In Mysore, Jana had stayed with a host family who had prepared food that was organic, where possible, peeled and washed in bottled water or filtered water. There were restaurants and homestay arrangements, all highly geared to Western foreigners with everything designed to facilitate their yoga study.

Julia was working in a rural village in India through a university project. I met a week before she returned to Germany. She had been to India previously to work on the same project. She lamented the fact that some of the places she had visited had changed so significantly from her previous visit a couple of years before. Julia found that India provided her with an opportunity to become aware of the ways in which she was 'German', such as always being extremely prompt. Prior to going to India, she had denied that she was in any way a stereotypical 'German.' Because of her work in an isolated location, Julia was very aware of the connections between her life in Germany and the lives of people she encountered in India. For instance, she recognized that many of the children she met through her program belonged to families who were directly involved in the tea industry. Thus, by purchasing fair trade tea, she could help support these families. Julia chose to dress in traditional Indian dress (Susan and Maggie also wore Indian dress, which was especially pleasing to their officemates). She felt that by wearing Indian attire she was protecting herself from the advances of Indian men and aligning herself with Indian women.

Karl was traveling with **Emma**. He had wanted to travel to Asia and she had wanted to go to India, so he went with her. He was an artist and had found lots of inspiration in India by the time I met him. He was a few years out of high school and planning to get into art college when he returned home to Switzerland. Unlike Emma, Karl was very interested in the cultural and spiritual aspects of India. Shortly after we met and did an interview, he was heading to an ashram to study meditation for 10 days. As a white man traveling with a woman originally from India, Karl was something of a celebrity. While Emma could sit quietly on buses and trains, people always wanted to talk to him about Switzerland and about his relationship with her. Karl was 2½ months into a four month trip. He had come to appreciate the casual conversation that abounds in India and was disappointed that on his return to Europe he wouldn't be able to make conversation with people he didn't know because they would think he was drunk or crazy.

Kate had a very short interview. She was waiting for her driver to pick her and her husband up from the hotel we were staying at in Ranakpur. There were a few reasons I was interested in talking to Kate. She and her husband carried themselves as stereotypical backpackers (cheesecloth clothing, unkempt hair, and a harsh critique of tourists); she and her husband (Australians) had been working in the UK for quite some time so that they could support their travel habit; finally, she had visited a massage parlor recommended by the *Lonely Planet* as a place women would feel comfortable. This parlor was the same business where I tried to get the owner to do an interview with me about running a business dependent upon independent travelers, while the owner was only interested in me writing to the *Lonely Planet* about her new clothing store. Kate was less eager than I was to do an interview and that, compounded with the arrival of her driver, made for a short and relatively superficial conversation.

Katrin had been invited to India to attend the wedding of someone with whom she worked. She traveled from Germany with her partner for a couple of weeks of travel before attending the wedding in the Punjab. Prior to the invitation, Katrin had not had any interest in traveling to India. She had a friend in Korea and so decided to combine a three week trip to visit her friend with a four week trip to India. When I interviewed her in Goa, she had been in India (although, she noted, Goa was not really India because it was very Western and very quiet) for only a few days. Because Katrin's English was limited (and my German was non-existent) and because I approached her for an interview without any previous contact, the interview was quite stilted and short.

Leah worked for an NGO in India and was there for a 10 month internship. After meeting **Susan** and **Maggie**, and interviewing Susan at the office where both NGOs were housed, Susan introduced me to Leah and Leah was happy to do an interview. For the previous couple of years, Leah had carefully tailored her CV to meet the parameters of a fellowship to India. Leah had gone to great lengths to integrate herself into the Indian community and, for that reason, she was very different from the other travelers with whom I spoke. Leah belonged to a dance troupe (in which all the other dancers were Indian) and often socialized with these dancers and their families outside of their rehearsals and performances. Leah was cynical towards backpackers, though she admitted she had not met or talked with any. Although Leah was very open towards Indian culture for the first

few months she was there, her frustration increased in the email updates she sent to her family and friends (a list on which she included me). At the end of her internship, she was happy to be returning home to the U.S., with little love left for her life in India.

Lexi had just finished studying development studies in Canada and saw travel to India as a way to actualize what she had learned in university. Lexi was very thoughtful about the practice of independent travel, particularly as it was policed by other travelers and people at home. She admitted to not being a very good traveler and being homesick, both qualities she felt she could not express without being criticized. Lexi was a staunch advocate of the use of humour as a way to get through difficult experiences. She reflected that one of the most ironic aspects of her travel to India was that she met more international travelers than Indians and learned more about countries like Germany and Israel than about India.

Liam traveled to India in December after a significant relationship ended painfully. We met because he frequented the same restaurant that I did. He was quite a bit older than the other travelers I met and spoke with, having recently turned 40. Liam chose India because it was inexpensive, people spoke English, and a friend had been to India several years earlier. When I met him, Liam had only been in Goa, having arrived in India 1½ weeks earlier, but "getting stuck" on the beach with the casual lifestyle. After he left Goa, Liam sent out frequent, short email updates to family and friends about his adventures, which always ended with beer. Liam and I are still in touch intermittently and I had the opportunity to visit him in Australia the year after we met in Goa (2006). He was in Sydney on his way back to India. He returned to India in December of 2007.

Maggie is a Canadian physician working as a researcher with an NGO in India. A mutual friend in Canada thought that she might be an interesting person to talk to and so I got in contact with her when I arrived in the city in which she was living. She had been back and forth between India and Canada for several stints before committing to a long-term residency in India. In addition to her time working, she and her partner made an effort to travel as much as they could. While she thought that she had traveled as a backpacker in the past, she had decided that she was no longer interested in traveling at the lowest possible level. She and her partner continued to travel independently on the suggestions of the Indians with whom she worked, rather than with the *Lonely Planet*. She was the only traveler I met who had removed her/himself from the independent travel infrastructure. This was due, in no small part, to the way in which we were introduced, otherwise, we never would have crossed paths. Maggie let me use her shower and spend a few hours at her place during an extended train-plane connection.

Mark was doing research for a travel company he was going to start up in Australia when I met him. He had previously traveled to India and found it to be a very frustrating experience due to the bartering system. After traveling several years later to the Middle East, which involved, by his account, less stressful bartering, he decided to return to India to see if he would be able to lead a tour of people in India. After he laughed and napped in response to a couple of days of complete chaos that involved his driver disappearing, the car breaking down, and several push starts (him pushing!), he figured he was up for the challenge. His plan was to start up a tour company in Australia (his home country) that

combined the cultural interaction and social responsibility of independent travel with a higher class, organized service. He wanted to integrate culture aspects such as cooking and local events into the tour. Mark would contribute a portion of the tour fees to a state charity that helped people to start up small scale businesses. Mark was clear to point out that he was not traveling as a backpacker because he had hired a driver and was staying in hotels with televisions and hot water.

Nigel was on a short trip to India for a family member's wedding. He was, however, preparing for a year-long trip beginning just a few months after he returned home to Australia. Nigel was Indo-Australian and made a point of explicitly noting his identification with Westerners rather than Indians – a "coconut", he called himself. He had traveled to India several times before and as I met him the first time in Bangalore, he was trying to satisfy a shopping list his mother had sent with him. After failing to meet up for an interview, we later ran into each other again in Kerala. A practicing Hindu, he was very appreciative of the way in which spirituality was integrated into people's daily lives in India. He was also very cognizant of the way that travel to India helped remind him that he could live a more simple, less consumerist life though he conceded this was difficult to commit to once he returned home. As a medical resident, he was going to take some time off to travel through Africa and the Middle East before he settled down with a job and a family.

Peter was a Belgian solo traveler who was introduced to me by my driver in India. Peter and my driver struck up quite a friendship (based to a considerable extent on drinking beer and whiskey) and when our car was unfortunate enough to break down, we shared a (cramped) ride from Pushkar to Jaipur. Peter was two weeks into his two month trip when I interviewed him and at that point, was making plans to meet up again with my driver throughout his trip around India. Based on his follow-up emails, this plan never came to fruition. Later on in our trips, we were both in Goa at the same time, but in different places – I went to Palolem which was supposedly a quiet beach and he went to Anjuna, the party beach – so we never managed to meet up again.

Raz was waiting for the same night bus from Palolem to Hampi when he introduced himself to me. Although he was in India by himself, as an Israeli he was quickly adopted into groups of other Israeli travelers. Raz spoke Hindi and Gujurati, which he felt were important means for him to have an experience other than a tourist experience. He often passed as a highly fashionable Indian, he told me, because of his hair style and clothing. Raz was very into taking it easy in India. This was accomplished in no small part by his active participation in drugs and casual sex, both elements that he believed were critical to my research on independent travel. After our interview on the night bus, he subtly (and then less subtly) suggested that he and I should have sex. I was dumbfounded and my lack of speech terminated our conversation. When we saw each other again – Hampi is a small place – it was rather awkward.

Rina was introduced to me by **Sara**, a fellow Israeli. After Sara had done an interview with me, we ran into each other further into our trips through Rajasthan. Sara had met up with a group of friends including Rina. Rina was happy to do the interview, which we did in a rickshaw going up a mountain – less than ideal conditions. Rina was a travel agent and had done a considerable amount of travel to places including South America, the United

States, Australia, and New Zealand. She was in India for three months. As a traveler in India, she took a standpoint of cultural relativism and tried to make as little impact or judgment as she could. Rina traveled to Toronto after she went to India and though we discussed the possibility of meeting up, I didn't see her in Canada.

Sara was recruited by my driver when we were in Rajasthan. While in an internet café, he overheard her asking about a ride out of the city. He offered to let her share our taxi (for free) in exchange for doing an interview. During our drive, Sara suggested that my relationship with my driver was problematic because I didn't speak up enough about what I wanted to do and he didn't listen to my half-hearted requests. She told me that Canadians were too polite and politeness was not conducive to travel in a place like India. As an Israeli, Sara was very aware of the way that Israeli travelers in general were perceived and was embarrassed about their loudness and their cheapness. A woman traveling alone, Sara was careful not to travel by night buses or trains and was having a difficult time balancing being alone and feeling safe. When we met for a second time, Sara asked me if I regreted having a driver because of the way my schedule impinged on my trip. I told her that if I had traveled without a driver, it just would have been a different trip. She found this observation to be a revelation because, to that point, she had been in search of the perfect trip and, not surprisingly, had been disappointed with what she had encountered. Taking a break from her studies in social work, Sara felt that her trip to India had been very valuable because it had taught her not to judge people so quickly – including on their appearance alone.

Shannel won her plane ticket through her workplace. The ticket could be used for anywhere in the world and she chose India because it was the furthest place from the United States, where she lived. The ticket was for two people and she brought her boyfriend with her because she couldn't imagine traveling in India without a man. Neither her nor her boyfriend had much in the way of savings and so they had to sell some of their possessions, including their camera, in order to take the trip. Shannel had a mixed racial background and could pass as Indian most of the time. When she couldn't pass, she told people she was Mexican, not American, so that they would better understand that she didn't have much money. Shannel identified as not middle-class, and was not troubled by the poverty or garbage she encountered in India. She told me that her grandmother had lived in a ghetto, so she had seen similar or worse conditions her whole life. I was in touch with Shannel until about a year after we returned. After her trip to India, she sent email updates about her subsequent travels to Brazil, to find the village in which her grandfather grew up, and then again to India.

Simon was the most bitter individual I encountered in India. Simon was an artisan and had managed to build his reputation sufficiently that he could afford to take a couple of months off each winter to travel. Unlike his ex-girlfriend, he was not interested in traveling to organized resorts like Tenerife. I met him in Rajasthan at a hotel where many other drivers had brought lower budget Western travelers. Simon had come to India by himself, seeking inspiration for his business. When he arrived in Delhi, he had tried to buy train tickets at the train station, but was told that all travel tickets for foreigners had to be purchased through a 'government' agent. At the agent's, Simon paid an exorbitant amount for a driver to give him a tour of Rajasthan (which he didn't want) and train tickets for the

rest of his two month trip. Needless to say, he was a highly annoyed traveler. As a Scot living in England, Simon did identify with Indians in one small way: as being colonized by England.

Sophie did a short interview with me while she waited for her taxi to the airport. Austrian, but leaving in Germany for several years, she had been prompted to go to India by her friend (who **Eli** replaced as an interview participant). When it was initially proposed as a trip, Sophie felt she could not go because of her job and lack of money. Her outlook changed when she came into a sizeable sum of money and decided that she didn't like her job and so traveled to India for six weeks. Of the travelers I spoke with, Sophie's trip was the most organized. She and her friend had planned their itinerary and booked their train and plane tickets from Germany. Sophie did not share the same desire to have unique experiences and get off the beaten track. She was particularly critical of travelers who followed travel routes identified in the *Lonely Planet* in search of such adventures as well as of travelers who tried to get beyond the commodification of their travel.

Susan was a university student in Canada, working on a health-related project in India. I met Susan through **Maggie**, as they worked out of the same NGO. She did not do a lot of travel, as such, but preferred for her overseas experiences to be more significantly tied to the place to which she traveled. That is, she preferred to work or be otherwise involved in the place she was visiting, rather than simply move through as a tourist or traveler. She had previously been involved in development work in Africa. While she was in India, she did undertake shorter term trips away from the city in which she was based. After completing her 6 month research position, she had plans to travel to the south of India and to Sri Lanka. Susan was Japanese-Canadian – the only Asian traveler with whom I spoke. She found that many Indians did not know how to place her and could not understand that she was from Canada. She was unsure how she was positioned in terms of gender relative to white women. Susan was very attentive to the ethics of travel, including the privilege that she had both as a Canadian and as a middle-class Canadian, the sustainability of giving money to beggars, and commodification of travel.

Vasu sat beside me at a dance performance. As we waited for the show to start, we made small talk, including why we were in India. I told him that I was doing research on backpackers and he was very intrigued. My timing was bad (or good) and he had to wait through the duration of a very long show to find out more. We went for dessert at a very fancy restaurant – certainly fancier than any I had been to in India – for the interview. Vasu had been to India 10 years before with his father, who was Indian (his mother was white American) and had decided to return to visit some of his family. His 2½ month trip to India was part of a 6 month trip through South and Southeast Asia, while on a one year leave from his job in the southern United States. Of all the people I spoke with, Vasu was the most reflexive, and the most guilt-ridden, about the money he had and the money he spent as a traveler in a poor country. He also traveled in a higher class than any of the travelers I met. Vasu had a very thoughtful perspective on his travel and understood his travel in a global context long before he arrived. He was aware of and critical of global class issues, such as the newly-emerging Indian middle class continuing to service the American middle-class through goods and services (including call centres, from which he received a call shortly before he left for India).